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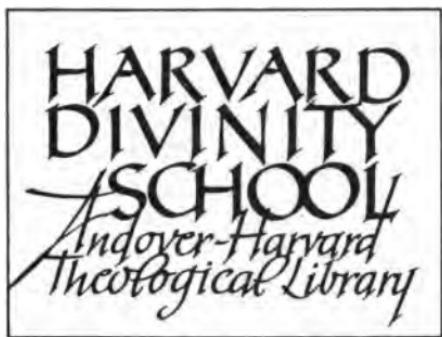
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## **ZION'S SERVICE OF SONG.**

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# ZION'S SERVICE OF SONG

ITS IMPORTANCE

IMPROVEMENT AND POSTURE.

BY

THE REV. S. J. MOORE,

BALLYMENA.

Psalmody is the highest of all religious exercises.—Dr. CHALMERS.  
Harmony is worship's gorgeous garment—the fiery chariot in which the  
soul is borne upward—home to heaven.—Dr. A. THOMSON.

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TO THE

**General Assembly's Committee on Psalmody**

THE FOLLOWING TREATISE

ON THE INTERESTING SUBJECT OF THEIR CONCERN

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY

**The Author.**

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## P R E F A C E .

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IN accordance with the suggestion of the General Assembly's Committee on Psalmody—" *That the ministers of our Church should preach more frequently on the service of praise,*" I lately delivered a series of discourses on that interesting and important subject. These, with a number of communications on posture in praise, and with some notes appended, are now thrown into the form of a Treatise, and published at the request of some friends in the congregation to whom they were addressed. These friends, • I apprehend, will find that the living voice imparts a charm which cold types fail to perpetuate. In looking over my task, *as executed*, I have reason to regret that the subject—fraught with importance as it is—did not fall into hands having more leisure, and better qualifications to do it justice. From my imperfect acquaintance with music, and from the many interruptions to which pastoral duties daily expose, defects and

mistakes, I doubt not, have resulted. If, however, this discussion shall aid the other means which are being employed to raise the attention of the Church to Psalmody, in any degree proportioned to the importance with which it is clothed in the Word of God, a great good shall have been gained, and the imperfections of the instrumentality will by the Christian be easily overlooked. The impression has become prevalent that our "service of sacred song" is in a most imperfect state—a disgrace to the Church; and "what a pity," as Watts long since said, "that the service which, of all others, is nearest akin to heaven, should be the worst performed on earth." Zion's harp has been too long upon the willows. The time is fully come that her minstrels should resume it, and enthusiastically sweep its cords in the songs of the Lord; that the service should be considered *Divine Worship*; that it should be literally *congregational*; that all should sing, and of course that all should *learn to sing*, and to *sing well*. Besides, from observation and Scripture, and the testimony of those best qualified to judge, I have come to the conclusion, that in the *standing posture* the service can be more efficiently rendered. This posture has been observed for years by a considerable number of congregations in the As-

sembly, with the best effect. In others, it was recommended and tried, to the manifest improvement, for the time, of the service of praise; but, by the immobility and opposition of the ANAKIM—*indolence, prejudice, and habit*, the proposal has been partially defeated. For these reasons, and because that, so far as known to me, the attention of the Church has not of late been adequately directed to the subject, I have dwelt at such length, and with such minuteness, on the “*posture of praise*,” and the objections usually made to it. That a vigorous and united, and sustained effort ought to be made to rescue the Church from the sin, and the shame, and the penance of a spoiled psalmody; and that the sacrifice of praise should be presented to God in the attitude of devout reverence sanctioned by the Bible, and required by the art of song, are opinions which I think a serious *consideration* would induce all unprejudiced persons to adopt. To persuade to this consideration, and so to promote the improvement of our service of sacred song, is my object in the following pages.

I have only further to state here, that from Coleman’s and from Bingham’s “Christian Antiquities,” from Jenning’s and Nevin’s “Jewish Antiquities,” from Binney’s “Service

of Song," Cumming's "Music in its Relation to Religion," Steen's "Standing the proper Posture in Praising God," and from the "Christian Treasury," I have received assistance in my work; and my best thanks are hereby given to the musicians, physicians, and ministers, who so promptly and kindly responded to my inquiries on the subject discussed.

S. J. M.

MANSE, BALLYMENA, *May*, 1856.

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ERRATUM, Note, page 125.

For ανασταντες εις την χαλυμωδιαν,  
 Read ανασταντες εις την ψαλμωδιαν.



## ZION'S SERVICE OF SONG.

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### INTRODUCTION.

"The mingled melody of wind and wave,  
And morning stars, that sweetly sang together,  
Of flocks and herds, and woods, and wilds, and birds,  
Touched like Heavenly anthem on the ear;  
For it rose a tuneful hymn of **worship**."

**JEHOVAH**, the great first cause of all, righteously demands to be worshipped by all the creatures of His hand. "All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord." The *irrational* glorify God, according to their instincts; the *inanimate*, according to their nature, answering the ends of their formation; and both, as presenting to man occasions and incentives to reverence and praise. The flocks of the field and the birds of the air appeal to God in their distress, and "He provides for them food;" and when balmy Spring breathes over the land, every tree, and every hedge-row is vocal with joyous welcome, from myriads of happy minstrels. Indeed, all creation is a choir. The music of the spheres, the morning stars' harmonious song, the thunder's

awful roll, the booming waves of the ocean, the winds sweeping through the harp-strings of the forest—all proclaim to the ear of nature's child, that nature's God is mighty. In the wild wastes also, and in the pathless woods, and along the lonely shore, there is now a sound, and again there is a silence that is vocal—each full of meaning and of music; both sublime, and both suggestive of a present Deity.

In the tones of the animate, and of the inanimate creation, the *plaintive prevails*. The cry of childhood, the bleating of the fold, the lowing of the herd, the howl of the watch-dog, the moaning of the winds, the chime of the waves—all plaintive, as if bearing a burthen of sorrow. “The whole creation groaneth in pain.” She feels the curse, chill and heavy on her heart, and hence her unceasing “*miserere*.” For the present, the instrument is out of tune. Sin hath rusted her chords and chilled her choir; but the rust will be removed, and the instrument will be re-tuned and touched by the maker's skilful hand; and the spheres and the winds above, and the mountains and the floods below, and the flocks that browse upon ten thousand hills—delivered from their bondage and burthens into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God, will all assume the major key, and weep no more. Creation, sympathising with emancipated humanity, will rejoice and triumph; and her heart like the lark, will rise on wing unwearied, borne up on the tide of joyous

melody to the bright enraptured sun, ever singing as it soars.

“Deep calleth unto deep.” “The hills skip like lambs.” “The earth trembles at the presence of the Lord.” Man—the intelligent creature of God—gazes in mute amazement, and worships that mighty One, who but *speaks*, and the wild elements are calm and still.

The tiny flower invites man’s mind to consider its charms, his senses to drink from it pure draughts of pleasure. If its wooing win him for a little from his cares and toil, the wonderful arrangement of its parts, its varied hues, its sweet fragrance, will leave the impression deep in his soul, that He who framed and arranged it, who painted its lovely tints, and infused it with such delicious perfume, is a Being of consummate wisdom, and of most refined tenderness, delighting to minister to the pleasure of His rational creatures. Let even the sensualist or the savage look upon the fields ripe to the harvest—the earth groaning under its golden grain, burthened with provisions for man and beast, and his soul will rise in gratitude to “The Great Spirit,” who crowneth the year with abundance—who openeth His hand liberally and supplieth the wants of all that live. Thus do “all His works,”—“the things that are made,” worship Jehovah.

For man, of all the creatures of this lower world, is it reserved to worship God directly and with design. Man’s worship may be audible and visible,

or it may be silent and hidden in the heart. When direct or strictly devotional, it is a thought, a feeling, or an emotion, of which God is the immediate object. This mental state may glow in the secret soul, unknown to all but its adoring subject and its omniscient object; or it may be embodied in words of prayer, in *Songs of Praise*, or in works of holy obedience, services, and sacrifices prescribed by God.

It is to the consideration of one of these developments of devotion—"THE SERVICE OF SONG," that I propose dedicating the following pages. But, before treating of the subject directly, I shall refer very briefly to

THE ORIGIN OF MUSIC, AND TO ITS EMPLOYMENT  
AMONG THE ANCIENTS.

To Jubal, the seventh from Adam, is the invention of musical *Instruments* ascribed. *Vocal Music* must have preceded these and suggested their construction. But how, or when, or where it originated, I have not been able to discover. Its origin, like that of many nations, is buried in a distant antiquity. However, the *glottis*, with which God furnished man at his creation, being of all musical instruments the most exquisite, the most finished and refined, it is certain that the uses of such an instrument could not long remain a secret. So that it may be reasonably asserted, that *singing* is almost coeval with speech; and that we may safely receive as a historical fact,

the Poet's *fiction* respecting our first parents in Paradise—

“That neither various style,  
Nor holy rapture, wanted they to praise  
Their Maker, in fit strains pronounced or sung.”

Music is the language in which emotion soon learns to clothe itself. Its tones reach the elevations of human joy, and heighten them ; and they fathom the depths of human sorrow, and soothe them. Patriotism is roused, courage braced, devotion deepened, pain alleviated, melancholy removed, hope brightened, piety promoted, and love fanned to a higher flame, by its mystic strains. The serpent is charmed by it, and it hurries the war-horse to the fatal charge. That an art of such power, and the source of such pleasure, should be early and generally practised, is natural ; and that it was so, is certain. Accordingly we find, that, in their social and sacred affairs, it was extensively used by the ancients. We have not evidence to determine that Jehovah commanded music to be employed in His service before the Jewish epoch ; but, we know that it was so employed, before the issuing of any Divine direction that has reached us ; and we know, that in their sacred mysteries, the pagans practised it at the remotest period of their history. Quite natural, even in the absence of tradition's lessons, that those benighted men should seek to propitiate their deities, by the same means that pleased their fellow-men. However, I believe

that tradition, as well as nature, taught the heathen to *sing*, as it taught them to sacrifice, in their religious ordinances ; and that this tradition flowed from the family of God.

In the East, the home of luxury and ease, music—the ministering spirit of these enjoyments—was cultivated, and highly appreciated. Of the architecture of the ancients, of their sculpture, and their poetry, many noble monuments remain ; but, of their musical compositions, none have reached us ; so that we are unable to judge of their merit, by comparison with our own, and whether they attained to harmony or were confined to melody. But, it is quite evident from history, that the practice of vocal and instrumental music was prevalent among them.

“In Egypt, the temples of Osiris resounded from morning till night with songs and hymns, and an order of priests conducted the musical service.” From the fact that the Israelites, immediately on their deliverance from bondage, were prepared to sing responsively their song of triumph and of praise, and that they were in possession of musical instruments, and were qualified to use them, there is evidence demonstrative, that music must have been universally practised in the land of Mizraim even by slaves. It is held indeed by some, that “Moses took the Egyptian as the model of the musical department of Divine worship, which he established in the wilderness.” It was, however,

long after the Church had ceased to wander, that the arrangements for the service of song in the house of the Lord were completed, not by Moses, but by David, under the direction of God.

Potter, in his *Antiquities*, informs us that the GREEKS were accustomed, while their sacrifices were being offered, to pray, and to sing sacred hymns—that supplications were addressed to the infernal deities, and that both prayers and praises were presented to the celestials. In their religious exhibitions, called “Feasts,” hymns were sung; and at one of these, the “*Panathenæa*,” there was a prize to be competed for by musicians. To be declared victor in one of these *musical discords*, was ranked among their highest honours. Æschylus died of grief, on seeing the prize adjudged to Sophocles, his junior.

From Livy and Ovid, we learn that among the ROMANS musicians attended to perform, while sacrifices were offered; and that without their services, even senators apprehended the sacrifices would be incomplete and unacceptable. By the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, trained professional musicians were employed at funerals and feasts, at the public games, in their theatres, and in their temples. At a feast given by Ptolemy Philadelphus, six hundred musicians were engaged; and both sacred and profane writers incidentally teach us, that the same system prevailed in “the lands of the Bible,” and neighbouring countries. Laban com-

plains that Jacob, by his hurried departure, had deprived him of the privilege of escorting him and his household "with mirth and with songs, with tabret and with harp." After one of Cyrus' victories, "among the booty which he ordered to be set apart for his uncle Cyaxares, were two famous female musicians, very skilful in their profession."

## CHAPTER I.

### THE HISTORY OF ZION'S SERVICE OF SONG.

#### I. ITS OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY.

" . . . These David set over the service of song in the house of the Lord."—1 CHRON. vi. 31.

FROM the records of the Old Testament, and of the Apocrypha, we learn, that song was employed in those distant days, to soothe sorrow, and to express joy—at social meetings, and at drunken revelries—in derision and contempt—in worship and in war. With a glowing hymn of triumph and of praise does the Hebrew Prophet inaugurate "the Church in the wilderness." The shackles of Israel had fallen off. God's chosen had escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowler. On the shores of "Araby the blest," they breathed the fresh air of freedom. They looked back and saw their tyrant masters sink like lead in the mighty deep. They saw "the Salvation of God"—a salvation from Egypt's grinding bondage, from Egypt's angry armies, and from the frozen watery walls, which, towering on the right hand and on the left, threatened them as they passed through; their hearts heaved with emotion, and in

poetry and song only could it find adequate expression.

Moses and the men of Israel sang unto the Lord—

“I will sing unto the Lord,  
For He hath triumphed gloriously;  
The horse and his rider  
Hath He thrown in the sea,” &c.

Miriam and the daughters of Israel, with their timbrels, responded—

“Sing ye to the Lord,  
For He hath triumphed gloriously ;  
The horse and his rider  
Has he thrown in the sea.” &c.—EXODUS xv.

This noble Hebrew hymn is thus beautifully paraphrased in verse, by a poet of our own—

“Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea,  
Jehovah has triumphed, His people are free.  
Sing—for the pride of the tyrant is broken,  
His chariots and horsemen, all splendid and brave.  
How vain was their boasting! The Lord hath but spoken,  
And chariots and horsemen are sunk in the wave.  
Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea,  
Jehovah hath triumphed—His people are free!

Praise to the Conqueror, praise to the Lord,  
His word was our arrow, His breath was our sword!  
Who shall return to tell Egypt the story  
Of those she sent forth in the hour of her pride?  
For the Lord hath looked out from His pillar of glory,  
And all her brave thousands are dashed in the tide.  
Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea,  
Jehovah hath triumphed—His people are free!”

Would that the gifted author of these lines had

drunk as deeply of the piety of the Hebrews, as he did of their poetry and patriotism.

Martial songs, in praise of their victorious generals, were common among the heathen ; but those of the Jews are usually directly and expressly in praise of “the God of battles;” whose glory “the daughters of Israel” and the Church celebrate for conquering His people’s enemies. Having introduced the Church of Israel to their wilderness wanderings with a song of triumph, the man of God takes leave of them, on the borders of their promised rest, in a sublime hymn of instruction, prophecy, and benediction, and, having “spoken all the words of this song in the ears of all the congregation of Israel,” he ascended Mount Abarim, gazed on “the goodly land,” and died.

The emancipation of Israel was manifestly not the first occasion on which music, vocal and instrumental, had been employed in social and religious observances. As already noticed, Laban proposed, had the opportunity been allowed him, to accompany Jacob and his household, on their departure, “with tabrets and with songs.” In the Book of Job, those are referred to “who take the timbrel and the harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ;” and the afflicted patriarch, ranking himself with the minstrel class, complains that *his own* harp was “turned into mourning, and his organ into the voice of them that weep.” However we understand the term “stars,” in the statement, “the morning stars sang together,”

to be intelligible, the language must have been addressed to those who were familiar with music, and with songs of joy, and gratitude, and admiration. Also, in the same book, Elihu represents God as "giving songs in the night." Elihu likely quotes an aphorism of the ancients, which "wise men"—his predecessors—"told from their fathers;" and the meaning, we presume, is not merely that God comforts those in their affliction who piously appeal to Him, but that He gives instruction, and encouragement, and hopes, the materials of which songs of praise are composed, and which songs the godly delight to sing. To David and others many such "songs were given." So that before the days of Moses and Miriam, and of Job and his "comforters," and of Jacob and Laban, were praises hymned to God, and music practised for social pleasure and spiritual profit.

Not detaining with the musical performance of Israel before the golden calf at Sinai, we hurry on over the period of their wailings and wanderings in the wilderness, and of their initiatory wars for the possession of Canaan; we pass from Moses to David, a period, during which, for want of patronage and peace, music could make but little progress. We pause merely to notice that instruction in music was considered of primary importance to a prophet, and therefore did it become a prominent object of the Levitical Colleges, or "Schools of the Prophets," established throughout the holy land.

Each of these had a president or preceptor, by whom the juvenile prophets were instructed, and under whose direction they "*prophesied*," i.e., they vocally and instrumentally celebrated the praises of Jehovah. Over one of these seminaries did Samuel preside, and to a class of these educated youths did Saul once join himself, and by Divine impulse prophesy along with them. The preceptors and their pupils "were instructed in the songs of the Lord, and cunning" or skilful in the art of music.

David—the shepherd, employed his musical acquirements to cheer his lonely hours ; David—the martial courtier, employed his sweet airs to soothe his monarch's melancholy mind ; and David—"the man after God's own heart," employed his voice and his harp to praise the God of his salvation. Early did his whole soul ingenuously gush forth in an elegy of great beauty and tenderness, on the fall of his royal foe and father, and of his brother beloved—the faithful Jonathan ; and he commanded that it should be taught to the children of Israel, calling especially upon "the daughters of Israel" to sing it in their mournings for the mighty dead. David ascended the throne, and, though waging successful war all around, he penned by celestial impulse, "the Songs of the Lord," for the service of the sanctuary ; and he studied and practised music himself—and, by the direction of God, appointed and generously patronised performers.

Hence the multitude of accomplished musicians (eight hundred and sixty-two), which he assembled at the introduction of the ark to its rest in Jerusalem. Solomon also must have fostered the cultivation of music and of sacred song—his peaceful reign being much more suitable for the purpose—with great zeal and success. Therefore, at the dedication of the temple, he could employ eight thousand singers, and twelve thousand instrumentalists; and, according to Josephus, a much greater number. When the priest, on this grand occasion, having placed the oracle beneath the wings of the two bright cherubim, came out of the holy of holies, the sound of music burst from the myriad choir, and swelling in harmony loud and high, of voices and instruments in sweet enrapturing concert, rolled its notes of grand and thrilling praise over all Jerusalem, then “the glory of the Lord filled the house.” During the succeeding reigns, the temple music-service died with the idolatry, and revived with the reformation of the monarch and the nation. As soon as the kingdom was consolidated, and the affairs of the Church had attained a tolerably settled state in Jerusalem, David, by Divine direction, made arrangements for the more regular and complete and perfect observance of all public religious ordinances. It seems there were at the time thirty-eight thousand Levites of proper age for service to be disposed of. He appointed twenty-four thousand to attend upon the *priests*; six thousand to be officers and judges

throughout the kingdom ; four thousand to be porters and police ; and, *four thousand to be musicians to conduct the Service of Song in the house of the Lord.* This choir he divided into "courses," or companies, each of which was to attend for a week at a time to perform the appointed service. Some of these sung, others performed on instruments. Each class had a leader, and over these leaders were three superintendents. These, I presume, are the persons called "Chief Musicians," to whom many of the Psalms were sent, that appropriate music might be composed for them, and that the choir on duty might have them prepared to be efficiently performed. They were all under the direction of one chief. Their first president was Chenaniah. On ordinary days they performed twice, *i.e.*, while the morning and evening sacrifices were being presented. With the additional sacrifices of the Sabbath, they had additional psalmody. On extraordinary occasions, of course, extra duty was required of the choir. In the temple, they stood across the east end of the court of the priests. The signal for commencing the service was given by the sacerdotal trumpeters, and instantly the whole band of instrumentalists and vocalists raised on high the loud anthem of praise. In every psalm admitting of it, there were divisions, and between these, a considerable pause in the music occurred, during which the people worshipped in silence.

Though the musical department of public worship

was the official duty of this temple-choir, young boys and females often joined in it, perhaps singing the *treble*, the part which they alone could appropriately take;<sup>1</sup> and, on extraordinary occasions, “all the house of Israel performed before the Lord.”<sup>2</sup> From such training, and patronage, and practice, it is not to be wondered at, that Israel attained to great proficiency in the art of music; and that Zion’s songs and minstrels were celebrated far beyond the bounds of their own country. Hence, “by Babel’s streams”—the place of their captivity—Israel was urged to sing the songs of Zion.

The TEMPLE, when erected, was the grand centre of all ceremonial worship. There, alone, sacrifices could be presented, but other religious services might be performed anywhere. SYNAGOGUES were very numerous in Jerusalem, and throughout the whole land after the captivity—whether they existed previously is not certain—they were the common houses of worship, public Sabbath-worship, and, for the more devout living contiguous, the places for daily-worship. The law did not prescribe any other form of public worship than that of the tabernacle and temple; with the exception of sacrifice, therefore, the temple worship, including vocal psalmody, was performed in the synagogue. Gillespie, in his “Aaron’s Rod,” concludes, that God left it to the synagogue-authorities to define what *order* should

<sup>1</sup> Ezra iii. 9—11; Neh. vii. 67.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Sam. vi. 5.

be observed in the readings and expositions, in the prayers and praises of the service.

In the synagogue-worship on Sabbath morning, "there was first an ascription of glory to God ; the Scripture for the day was read from the law—then another doxology was chanted to the praise of Jehovah; then followed the Scripture from the Prophets, and an address to the people. The service was concluded with prayer." In the afternoon and evening service, the time was chiefly occupied with *singing* and prayer. From Calmet and Basnage, we learn, that psalmody also accompanied the rite of circumcision in the synagogue.

Without particularising farther, I may state generally, that, throughout the subsequent history of the Jews down till the days of Malachi, at their social entertainments, their religious feasts, in their temple service, in private families, around the pass-over table, in homes of sorrow, at funerals, when going out to battle, and when returning victorious—when going up to their holy city to their periodical solemnities, and when returning—at the commencement and completion of any great enterprise—when awaking from slumber in national sin, and when the chains of their captivity were broken—on these and all similar occasions, did young men and maidens, old men and matrons, unite in songs of praise.

## II. ITS NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY.

AT the approach of "the messenger of the covenant so long promised and expected, the spirit of prophetic song returned and flowed forth in the enraptured strains of the Virgin's "*magnificat*," and in the glowing gratitude of the "*benedictus*" chanted from the unsealed lips of Zacharias. He of whom inspired poets and enthusiastic minstrels had sung, was ushered upon His earthly sojourn with an anthem by a multitude of the heavenly host. Again, the spirit of ancient prophetic fire blazed forth in the Simeon's sweet "*Demittis*," to illumine our Emmanuel's first entrance into His Father's house.

In the chamber of death, Jesus found, as in olden time, "the minstrels making a noise." In His lovely picture of the prodigal's return, He makes all the halls of the father's happy home to resound with merry music. Occasionally, the fickle multitude followed Him rejoicing and praising God, with a loud voice proclaiming their "*hosannahs*"; and He and His disciples hymned the "*hallel*" in the passover-chamber ere He departed to the "Garden" and the "Cross," to close the ceremonial dispensation, and make an end of sin. Thus was His advent with angelic song, and in His departure He struck the key note of the "*new song*" to be hymned through *eternal ages*.

In the Acts and the Epistles the references to sacred song are few; being usual, it is seldom noticed. The opinion is held by some that the primitive Church *had its psalms and psalmody direct from heaven*; that, while Jewish converts constituted the great body of the Church, the old Hebrew hymns, now clearly understood, sufficed; but, when Gentile converts multiplied, and especially when they constituted the whole congregation, that new psalms, better adapted than those of a preparatory and prophetic dispensation, were required to give expression to their admiration of, and gratitude for a Saviour *already come*, who had fulfilled all that the prophets and old psalms had said concerning Him, and that, therefore, the Christian “Prophet” was given by God, and inspired to utter a “psalm” as well as a “doctrine;” and the Church listened and learned, joined in the exercise of praise, and reserved the piece for future congregational use. The apostle says, “I will *sing with the spirit* ;” and, in order that the Ephesian Church might “speak in hymns, and psalms, and spiritual songs,” and *sing them to the Lord*, he enjoins that they “be *filled with the Spirit*.<sup>1</sup> Respecting this view, I have only to state that “the Spirit” has been requisite in every age to praise God acceptably; and, farther, that, if the “prophets” whom God gave for the edification of the Church, were endowed

<sup>1</sup> See Binney’s Service of Song, and Gaußen on Inspiration, p. 65.

by the Holy One with a spirit of sacred poetry, and with a spirit of sacred music, so that they could utter or compose new psalms and new music adapted to them, it seems unaccountable that the old Jewish psalms should be preserved, and that the new Christian poems should have been lost. If "given by inspiration, and profitable," why not permanent? Should it be answered, that they are preserved in the New Testament, I have only to add that there are many passages in the New Testament which, either in prose or verse, may be, and are I believe, most suitably and profitably employed in the psalmody of the Church. Let the songs of the sweet singer of Israel be maintained in the high position in which piety and revelation have ever placed them; while no man who has experienced the deep emotions which many of them breathe, will declare that position to have been too high, neither will any unprejudiced party hazard the assertion that "Paul's Triumphs,"<sup>1</sup> or "John's High Hymns of the Redeemed" in the Apocalypse, do occupy a lower level; or that they, and many other New Testament passages, are less worthy to be employed in the joyous exercise of praising our Saviour-God. Be this as it may, however, what bears on my present object is to state that Paul<sup>2</sup> and James<sup>3</sup> recommend the privilege, and enjoin the duty of "singing to the Lord psalms, and hymns,

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 31—39; 2 Tim. iv. 6—8. \* Col. iii. 16. \* James v. 13.

and spiritual songs ;” that they did so themselves in private<sup>1</sup> and in public ;<sup>2</sup> and that, in the Revelation,<sup>3</sup> John introduces us to the psalmody of the Church redeemed and glorified, aided by the angelic choir, the whole universe, stirred to sympathy, chiming in. The redeemed—the inner circle—nearest to the throne of God and the Lamb, begin the song—

“Thou art worthy to take the book,  
And to open the seals thereof;  
For thou wast slain, and by thy blood  
Hast redeemed us to God,  
Out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;  
And hast made us unto our God kings and priests:  
And we shall reign upon the earth.”

The outer circle—the angelic throng, numbering ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, follow with loud voice, in sweet acclaim—

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain  
To receive power, and riches,  
And wisdom, and strength,  
And honour, and glory, and blessing.”

The universe responding prolongs the symphony—

“Blessing, and honour,  
And glory, and power,  
To Him that sits upon the throne,  
And to the Lamb for ever.”

And the first circle of the choir—the white-robed elders—bend before the throne in lowly adoration, and the living ones conclude with a solemn “Amen.”

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvi. 25.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. v.

In taking leave of the field of inspired testimony, I ask the reader to consider HOW IMPORTANT in the esteem of Heaven psalmody must be, since such prominence is given to it throughout the Scriptures, and such provision made for the proper conducting of it in the house of the Lord.

### III. ITS HISTORY IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

By the express authority of Heaven, singing the Divine praise has ever formed a prominent part in the worship of the Christian Church. The first disciples, in accordance with their Jewish custom, and the Gentile converts, in accordance with Apostolic injunction and example, sung psalms. The Priests and Levites principally conducted this part of Divine service in olden time, but, under the new dispensation, all God's people were anointed "a royal priesthood," to show forth the praises of their Redeemer-God. It became the duty and privilege of every member of the Church to join in the delightful exercise. Psalmody became congregational—and, to the extent of the Church at least, David's prayer was answered, and his prophecy fulfilled, "Let all the people praise Thee." If it were so that "God gave songs in their night" of affliction, and psalms in their worshipping assemblies,<sup>1</sup> to the Apostles, and to some of their divinely-gifted

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiv.

converts, those ascriptions in the *Apocalypse* and *Pauline Triumphs*, to which reference has been made, may be fragments of them. And of some of these, perhaps, does Pliny speak, when he states regarding the Christians in the first century, that they were "accustomed to rise before day, and to sing alternately a hymn to Christ as God."<sup>1</sup> Jerome testifies that the practice was so common in the fourth century, that, "in Christian villages little else was to be heard but psalms." According to Augustine, "the faithful found it to be a means of mutual consolation and excitement, with a joint harmony of voices and hearts;" and others of the ancient Christian writers speak of the pleasure which the Christians in their solemn assemblies took in the musical service, and declare that many of the wicked were won over by it. Singing the praises of God constituted in those days a large portion of public worship. In the Churches in some districts, so many as *twelve psalms were sung in succession*; but, generally, they were interspersed with prayers, and readings, and expositions. In private, also, at their meals, at their social meetings, at their domestic worship, and daily occupations, did the zealous people of God delight to sing their songs of praise. In places where the people were previously strangers to the forms of Gospel worship—where Christian psalmody was a new thing, a qualified person sung

<sup>1</sup> See Note A., Appendix.

alone for a time, and the people, as they became familiar with the service, joined him. Generally, the whole assembly sung together. Occasionally, the congregation divided, and alternately sang the verses of the psalm. Nor was it uncommon, in the fourth century, for one person to begin the stanza, and for the whole church to unite with him in concluding it. The privilege, however, was not strictly universal. Those under discipline for serious offences were not allowed to join in public worship, in that holy service—that pure praise, “which is comely only for the upright.” They either sat in silence, or lay prostrate upon the ground. Neither were those who could not read permitted to join in praise, unless they had the sacred song committed, that the music and their devotion might not be distracted. Like the Anti-Pædobaptists of the last century, the Donatists, according to some authors, repudiated psalmody as a human invention. In this, as well as in other departments of Divine worship, the practices of the Church at different times and in different places, were varied greatly.

By Ambrose, Gregory, and others, efforts were made to have the Church improved in the science of sacred music. Unfortunately, however, the result in a short time was, that those only who were regularly trained could join in the exercise, and the singing of God’s praise in public worship was gradually transferred to qualified persons appointed for the purpose. Soon followed the Council of

Laodicea, *prohibiting* all but the “CANONICAL SINGERS,” from engaging in the service. In process of time, these “Psalmistæ” were ordained, and became one of the clerical orders. The “Precentors” connected with the cathedral establishments of Rome and England, are, I presume, the representatives of those musical canons of antiquity. In this prohibition, the ecclesiastical authorities had, no doubt, a most laudable design to rouse the attention of the people to the all-important duty of public praise, and to induce them to learn to perform it in a manner becoming the house of God. It was likely intended at first to be temporary, as it was provincial; but, ultimately the law became universal in the ecclesiastical Roman world, that the laity should not take part in the psalms and hymns belonging to “The Divine Office,” or “Mass.” The observance of this law was at length completely secured, by changing the songs of Zion into a dead language, unknown to all but ecclesiastics and the few learned. Church Psalmody became a refined, and complicated, and sensuous, and difficult service, to be attempted by none but the highly qualified, who may have enjoyed it as a devotional exercise; but to the audience—the multitude, it was, I apprehend, a mere musical entertainment. The people’s “occupation” in this most heavenly part of earthly worship “was no more.” Murmurs were heard for a little, but soon all was silence. During the long, dark, cold night that followed, the Waldenses and

Albigenses alone retained the privilege of *all* uniting in the praises of God, in their own language, at public worship; and, in the hottest seasons of persecution, their souls were cheered in singing their Divine Songs.

#### IV. ITS HISTORY IN THE CHURCHES OF THE REFORMATION.

INVARIABLY, a return to Gospel principles and piety has been associated with improvement in Psalmody. So it was, when the morning of the Reformation dawned, and so it has since been wherever revivals have occurred. In different countries there were "Reformers before the Reformation." These were in various places called "*Lollards*," from the German words "lollen" and "herr," which signify to praise the Lord. The *Hussites*, in Bohemia, were famed for their sacred music; and some of their hymns and beautiful airs were adopted by the great German Reformer. The metrical psalms were first introduced by Calvin, to the service of the Protestant Church. Some fifty of them were translated into French verse by Clement Marot, and the remainder by Beza, at Calvin's request. Marot's metrical translation became very popular in France. All ranks in social and in sacred assemblies rejoiced to sing his psalms. The prince, the courtier, and the peasant, had each his favourite psalm associated with some popular ballad air. Romanists flocked to Protestant assemblies to hear the psalmody. At

first the ecclesiastical authorities offered no opposition, but psalmody and Protestantism soon became so associated, that Rome took the alarm. Marot was banished from his native land, the singing of his psalms in the language of the people was interdicted, and the obscene odes of Horace and Tibullus were translated into French verse and substituted for the songs of Zion. Claude Goudimel, who was a chief agent in setting the metrical psalms to music, was murdered at Lyons, by a popish rabble, who dragged his body through the streets, and cast it into the Rhone. Through Rome's influence, the Government of France ultimately passed a law, inflicting a fine of 200 francs on the person found guilty of the crime of psalm-singing in the vulgar tongue. A metrical version of the Psalms, with suitable music attached, was dispersed through Italy, but the fire thus kindled was soon extinguished in blood.

Luther was passionately fond of music. "Next to divinity," said he, "there is no art comparable to music." He translated many of the early hymns into German. He even versified his Liturgy and his Catechism, and had music set to them. Thus were the people furnished with sacred songs in their own language, and their lips, so long sealed in the sanctuary, were opened, and they rejoiced and praised the Lord. To the Reformation, therefore, are we indebted for the restoration of *Congregational Psalmody*. The early German Hymnology was to a large extent doctrinal; and, therefore,

tended powerfully to infuse Gospel principles into the minds of the whole population, and to overturn error and superstition. The two great reformers differed as to sacred song in two important points. Calvin rigidly adhered to the "*Melody*," while Luther, being himself an adept in music, patronised the "*Harmony*," or singing in parts ; Calvin, after the Psalms of David were versified, sanctioned the use of them only in his churches ; whereas Luther composed hymns himself, and translated others, which he used in public worship as well as the Psalms. The Germans excel in music and in their taste for sacred song. In many places they hold weekly associational meetings for "*practising*," to prepare for "the service of song" in the Sabbath sanctuary. Hence it is that tourists have reason to tell us of the elevating influence of German Psalmody ; and hence Germany is, by way of eminence, called "The land of Psalm-singing."

In *Holland*, the Protestants of the Reformatior period sung psalms at family worship and in thei Sabbath assemblies.

*England* received congregational psalmody—perly so called—from the Continent, by English exiles. Bishop Jewel testifies that "nothing promoted t Reformation more than inviting the common peo to sing psalms ; and that sometimes there wo be 6,000 persons singing together, which was grievous to the Papists." However, Cranmer previously adapted the translation of the Litar

a chant ; and, about the year 1550, the whole cathedral service of England was adjusted to music and published. In Mary's reign, the music was restored to the original Latin version ; and when Elizabeth ascended the throne, the English service was resumed, and an injunction published on choral music.

In *Scotland* also congregational psalmody formed a regular part of public worship. It must be granted, indeed, that the poetry of the British Reformers savoured more of Zion than of Helicon ; but their music was very superior. The Scotch Psalms were in a great variety of metres, and under the first verse of each was an appropriate tune in all the four parts. Their tunes were some of British and some of Continental origin. Instruction in music was an ordinary branch of education in which the Kirk took peculiar interest ; and the Parliament of James VI. in 1579 enjoined that “ where schools are founded, *ane sang school* shall be set up, with a master sufficient to instruct the youth in the science of music.” Nor was such training lost on the people ; for Calderwood informs us that in 1682, on the occasion of a favourite citizen’s return to his native town, 2,000 persons, collected indiscriminately from the streets of Edinburgh, escorted him from the outskirts of the city to the High Kirk, “ singing, as they passed along, the 124th Psalm, *in parts.*” But a sad falling away, *even Caledonians themselves grant*, soon afterwards took place. Was this owing to their peculiar ecclesiastical system, to their forms of worship, or

to their using exclusively vocal music in the Divine service? It may, I presume, be ascribed to a number of causes. In an evil hour for her sacred song, Scotland gave up her own Psalter, with its many metres and corresponding harmonies, and adopted the more uniform version of Rous; and, besides, she submitted to an act of the Long Parliament, which enjoined precentors while singing the psalm to read it out "line by line!" No marvel that our sacred music became what it was, and in too many places still is, a compound consisting of a very small amount of melody, commingled with, and interrupted, and baffled by, the outlandish half-sung, half-spoken, "*lining*" of a drawling precentor—the amusement and the amazement of the infidel, the worldling, and "*the Muses*." A writer in the *Free Church Magazine* attributes the decline of psalmody in the Kirk of Scotland to the fact, that "Presbyterians, at the time referred to, found it necessary, in almost everything pertaining to worship, to follow a course the opposite of Prelacy, their great opponent; that, for the very sake of simplicity, and to be removed as far as possible from the imposing ceremonial of that system, they denied themselves a well-arranged and well-executed music; and that, when the Presbyterian Church was finally established and peace restored, ere the prejudices arising from the cause intimated died away, so that there could be a return to a spirited and *proper psalmody*, "moderatism fell upon the

Church, and the desk and the pew became as heartless as the pulpit."

The Irish Presbyterian Church seems to have gone through an ordeal similar to that through which her mother of Scotland passed. Her competency at one time in domestic and public psalmody, and her subsequent decline, are thus depicted by a son of her own,<sup>1</sup> towards the end of the last century :—" Many of us remember the time when twelve or fifteen tunes were taught in almost every congregation, and scarcely a man or woman was incapable of singing them with tolerable exactness. Then almost every father who pretended to have any religion could preside publicly in the singing of psalms ; and it seemed to be the pride of parents to have their children instructed in the knowledge and practice of these tunes, that the praises of God might continue to be sung in their homes, when they would themselves be silent in the dust. But now how few are either qualified or inclined to lift their voice with melody in the house of the Lord ! The general neglect of this Divine exercise is shamefully evident. In some of our congregations the number of tunes *attempted* to be sung does not exceed *four*, and even in these scarcely a fourth part of the worshippers pretend to join. Nay, there are instances in which public worship (or a part of it) has been celebrated *without psalms*, merely because, in the fortuitous absence of the clerk, there was no

<sup>1</sup> Dr. W. S. Dickson, Portaferry.

man in the whole congregation who could pitch a tune. We pass by the imperfect and discordant tones in most of our congregations which attempt to sing—tones which produce a jarring noise, more LIKE THE TUMULTUOUS ROAR OF RIOT AND CONFUSION, than that soft enchanting melody, that harmonious concord which attunes the soul to peace and joy and love Divine!"

That the prominent features of the present are observable in this dark picture of the past, is manifest, from the general complaint respecting the miserably low state of our Church Psalmody, and our acknowledged deficiency in this department of the Divine service. But, now that the music is no longer mangled by "giving out the lines"—that groundless prejudices are giving way—that "moderatism" is rapidly disappearing from Scotland—and that the Church of Ulster has shaken off the nightmare that paralyzed her so long, it is cheering to find that the Churches of both these lands are awakening to a sense of their sin, in allowing "the service of song"—Zion's highest privilege and pleasure—to become a penance to the musical ear—a hissing and a bye-word "to those that are without;" and that effective means are being adopted by particular congregations, by Sabbath-schools, by day-schools, by some presbyteries, and by the supreme courts of these Churches, for restoring psalmody to the high platform it should always have occupied. Besides, some of the first musicians of *the present time* are giving the preference to the

solemn and sublime music of the Reformation era, and in their collections many of the tunes are taken from the old English, and Scotch, and Genevan Psalters, and from the German Chorals; so that we may confidently hope that, with the revival of the spirit and doctrines of the Reformation, the psalmody of the Reformation is being also revived. Immediately after the Disruption, the Free Church appointed a Committee on Psalmody. Classes are opened in the Normal Schools of the Free Church in Edinburgh and Glasgow, for the training of precentors; and lectures on sacred music, accompanied with suitable and well-executed illustrations, have been delivered during the past season, in the principal towns of Scotland, by competent persons, with great acceptance. A "Psalmody Committee" was also appointed lately by the Irish General Assembly; and, in connexion with the District Model Schools of this country, instruction in music forms part of the education to be attained. Classes for sacred music are multiplying, and qualified precentors are better paid. Is this attention to this important matter, and the partial improvement in the service of sacred song that has already taken place, the result or the precursor of a religious revival? Both, I trust. So it was in America, in the great revival at Northampton, under Edwards. "Our public *praises*," he says, "were then greatly enlivened. In our Psalmody, God was served in the beauty of holiness. There has been no part of Divine worship in which good men have

had grace so drawn forth, and their hearts so lifted up in the ways of God, *as in singing His praise.* The people sung with unusual elevation of heart and voice."

In concluding this brief, and necessarily imperfect sketch of the history of Zion's Service of Song, let me urge the reader to remember that wherever Zion's children were revived and refreshed by the Spirit of the Lord, Psalmody was ALL-IMPORTANT in their esteem; and, while we have reason of shame and repentance, because it has been so long and so generally disregarded, as the preceding pages testify, let us rejoice that God is leading the Churches to seek the IMPROVEMENT of the service of praise.



## CHAPTER II.

### ZION'S SERVICE OF SONG A DUTY.

#### ALL SHOULD SING THE DIVINE PRAISE.

"Have our hearts grown cold? Are there on earth  
No pure reflections caught from heavenly joy?  
Have our mute lips no hymn—our souls no song?"

**GOD COMMANDS THE SERVICE**, by His prophets and apostles in express precepts, by the practice of the Jewish and Apostolic Church, and by the example of Christ Himself; by reference, by commendation, and by direct injunction, it is urged upon the attention of the Church, in some **FOUR HUNDRED PASSAGES** of God's Word! Unless prayer be an exception, to this there is no parallel. How seldom, compared with this, is the reading of the Scriptures, the preaching of the Gospel, and even belief in Christ commanded. No doubt, a duty once enjoined by supreme authority is as binding as if it were inculcated ten thousand times, and its non-performance would be a violation of the whole law, and would involve in all the fearful results of enmity and rebellion against God; yet it cannot fail to attract the notice of an attentive reader of the Divine Word, when an injunction is repeated with

such extraordinary and unwearying frequency, and to leave upon his mind the deep impression that, in this duty, there must be something peculiarly pleasing to God, and profitable to His people. And it is even so; for the great object of psalmody is to glorify our Father in heaven—to give expression to our devotional feelings in the most powerful manner—to cherish, to elevate, and even to beget such feelings in our own souls, and to “edify,” rouse, and “exhort” our fellow-worshippers to sympathize with us in our gratitude and adoration. Jehovah desires and claims this love, and He so frequently urges the most energetic enunciation of it in poetry and song, that it may be fostered, and increased, and made known; because no glory can accrue to Him without it, and no service of ours can be acceptable. By “precept upon precept,” then—by “line upon line”—by example, human and Divine—by the high and indispensable object which the service has in view—by the higher privileges and brighter prospects presented in the Gospel—by the capacity for song, and the susceptibility of pleasure from its employment, with which we are created, and by the influence for good which we may thus exercise over our fellow-worshippers—by all these motives, and many besides, is every genuine member of the Christian Church called upon to sing the praises of his Saviour-God. For the ordinarily constituted, there is no apology for *sitting silent*, which reason, or conscience, con-

sistency, or honour, could tolerate ; and yet, in a congregation consisting of two hundred communicants, which I lately addressed, I could observe but *seven* persons who accompanied the precentor in praise ! Did these silent "members of the Church" come to worship or to insult God ? Did they thus reason with themselves—"God has created me capable of sacred song, *but I'll not sing*. God commands me to praise Him for what He is ; *I'll not do it*. For what He hath done ; *I'll not do it*. God the Son importunes me by His incarnation, by His obedience unto death, and by His example, to sing the Divine praise ; *I'll not do it*. God the Holy Spirit calls upon me to praise, by His patience, and illuminating and sanctifying grace ; *I'll not do it*. God the Father, Son, and Spirit, by His inspired prophets and apostles, by the example of the Jewish and Apostolic Church, by the example of the angels and the redeemed in heaven, calls upon me to praise, laud, and bless His glorious name ; *I'll not do it*. Habit commands, the devil commands, the flesh commands me to remain silent in the sanctuary during the service of sacred song ; *this I'll do*, and risk the results along with the unbelieving and disobedient !" Do the silent members of the Church thus reason ? No, no ; the mutes in Zion do not thus reason ; though they do *practically* insult God, they do not design it. They may be "by Babel's streams" in the meantime, and, therefore, their harps are on the willows ; or rather, perhaps they do not

know, they have *not considered* the duty, the privilege of praise. If any be not *well* qualified for the service, let them do it as they can, and prepare to do it better ; and if any be so highly accomplished in the science of music, that they cannot think of joining in psalmody so imperfectly performed, let them remember the command of God, and let them consider that their taking part in the service would tend to its improvement, and that their influence should be exerted to have the young taught to do it right. It is greatly to be regretted, that many who can enchant an evening party with their sweet melodies, cannot be persuaded to sound one note in the sanctuary to the praise of God, and to the spiritual profit of His children, nor to take any practical interest in the improvement of congregational psalmody. Accomplished Christians should never dream for an hour that their musical acquirements, however rare, are too high to be employed in God's worship, in the humblest rural sanctuary. Harps of *gold* are swept in heaven, and, in the esteem of those heavenly harpers, they are not too precious. Upon every talent, every qualification, the true disciple of Jesus loves to have " Holiness to the Lord " inscribed. In the seclusion of " the closed closet," and especially in the public sanctuary, and daily at the domestic altar, he feels bound by the express law of heaven, and impelled by the promptings of his own renewed nature, to sing the *high praises* of the Lord. " Let saints sing aloud

upon their beds."<sup>1</sup> (From M'Cheyne's closet the voice of praise was often heard.) "Sing unto the Lord in the congregation of His saints."<sup>2</sup>

It is strange that in the Presbyterian Church, in which it is usual for the people to share audibly in the service of song alone, any members should be found not anxiously availing themselves of the privilege. The person who *can* sing, or who *could learn* to sing, and who indolently or incorrigibly refuses to do it, hides his talent in the earth, repudiates the claims of Heaven, sins against God, against his own soul, against the whole congregation, and especially against the preacher. I knew a minister who was greatly distressed because his congregation were leaving the psalmody almost entirely to the precentor. He remonstrated with them privately and from the pulpit, to no purpose. At length, one Sabbath morning when the first psalm was being sung, he rose hurriedly, and putting his hand upon the precentor's head, said to him in an authoritative tone—"Sit down, sir, sit down; where is the use of you proposing to *lead* in the Divine praise, when there are none to follow you; we'll have no more of your '*solos*'; when the Church feel disposed to restore congregational psalmody, we'll have it, but no more of this." After a few *psalmless* Sabbaths, the people generally engaged to join in the service, and at their request it was resumed, and became almost congregational.

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxlix. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. cxlii. 1.

*"In the dwellings of the righteous,"* as well as in the closet and the sanctuary, "will the voice of rejoicing be heard, for the Lord is their strength and *song*." They have "a church in their house," with all its ordinary private services, praise, instruction, and prayer. Those parents do well who daily assemble their domestics around the family altar, and then lift the heart and bow the knee before the throne of Jacob's mighty God ; those parents do better who daily read God's Word in their family, as well as pray ; they do best of all, who not only read and pray, but also PRAISE, "in grave sweet melody," the Heavenly Friend and Father of Christian families. Children love the exercise, and are glad to join in it. That sacred poetry, and those familiar tunes, will tend to soothe and sanctify them till life's latest hour. These holy, divine sentiments will linger in the chambers of memory, and, responsive to these sweet melodies, will the soul's best emotions vibrate as long as life lasts—

" You may break, you may ruin the vase if you will,  
The scent of the roses will hang round it still."

The passages of the Divine Word enjoining and commanding praise, are far too numerous to be given here ; and, I presume, the reasons for praising God are beyond all calculation. I have, therefore, thought it sufficient to direct attention to a very few texts having reference to praise. 1. In private ; 2. In *the family* ; and, 3. In the public congregation.

For discharging the duty and enjoying the privilege in private, then, let the child of God see his authority in Psalm cxlix. 5, “Let the saints sing aloud *upon their beds* ;” also, James v. 13, “Is any merry, let him sing psalms ;” let the pious family and social circle see their authority in Psalm cxviii. 15—

“In *dwellings* of the righteous  
Is heard the melody  
Of joy and health.”

“Jehovah has become their salvation,” and therefore “is He their SONG ;” and let the worshippers in Zion see their authority in Psalm cxlix. 1, “Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise *in the congregation* of saints ;” and even if we had no verbal precept, in either the Old or New Testament, for this act of public worship, and should any contend that Col. iii. 16 does not apply to public worship in the Sabbath sanctuary, we have, in the divinely authorised practice of praise in the temple and synagogue worship of the Jews, an all-sufficient and obligatory law for the service of song in the house of the Lord.

Alone, and in the family, and “in the great congregation,” then *Praise God in Song*, for—

God requires and demands it.

He hath given rich reasons for praise in creation, providence, and redemption.

He hath given songs of praise.

He hath furnished every one with a musical instrument.

He hath made singing a pleasure for the performer and the hearer.

He hath made singing the most powerful mode of expression.

The service of song is the highest style of Divine worship.

More than any other does this service, when properly executed, qualify for the other ordinances of the sanctuary.

The Church, when living and free, hath always rendered this service to her sovereign Lord.

“It is comely” for all, but especially “for the upright.”

I conclude these few remarks on the duty of praise, in the language of the late Dr. Andrew Thomson, of Edinburgh, an accomplished musician, and an ornament to the Gospel ministry—“Singing in the sanctuary should be *universal*, every heart worshipping, and every voice too—no praising of God by proxy. It is one of the worst signs of the devotional state of a Church, when its members sit in silence, listening luxuriously to the choir. Deep and fervent devotion could not keep silence, the burning flame would seek vent. And when *all* join in the praise—the trembling voice of age, the vigorous bass of manhood, the sweet depth of woman’s melody, and the thrilling sounds of happy childhood—all singing and yet all accordant, as if the great assembly had, by some mighty power of sympathy, become one heart and one soul, music has

then become the proper garment of worship—the fiery chariot in which the heart is borne upward,” home to heaven—and we rise on the wings of Zion’s melody to the general assembly of the first-born, and in spirit we join with them in their new song. What a length, and breadth, and height, and depth of meaning there now is in the 67th, the 98th, and in the 100th Psalms. Palestine, “the land of promise,” is no longer a little speck on the earth’s surface; it encircles the globe. These Psalms are no longer the summons to praise issued to his Levites, by an exclusive, narrow-hearted Jew, but the invitation—the command—to *harmony universal*, issuing from the supreme throne and the divinely generous heart of David’s Son and David’s Lord, to all the inhabitants of the earth. The works of the devil being all destroyed, every sound of discord silenced, every sigh of sorrow hushed—the kingdoms of this world having become the kingdoms of our God, and of His anointed—the proclamation goes forth, and every man “hath an ear to hear,” and a heart to feel, and a voice to respond—

“Let *all the earth* unto the Lord  
Send forth a joyful noise,  
Lift up your voice *aloud* to Him,  
Sing praises and *rejoice*,” &c.

And again—

“*All* people that on earth do dwell,  
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice,  
Him serve with mirth, His praise forth tell,  
Come ye before Him and *rejoice*,” &c.

Once more, I ask how inconceivably **IMPORTANT**, in Heaven's esteem, must be this service of praise, to which we are urged by such commands, commendations, motives, and prospects, as are not employed to persuade us to engage in any other duty. Oh ! then grudge not God the glory that accrues to Him from the sacrifice praise.



## CHAPTER III.

### ZION'S SERVICE OF SONG SHOULD BE EFFICIENTLY PERFORMED.

**THE MUSICAL MATERIAL, THE PSALMODIC MATERIAL,  
AND THE MANNER AND SPIRIT OF THE SERVICE.**

"Of all your gifts, every heave-offering shall be ~~the~~ best."—*Num. xviii.*

To sing God's praise is DIVINE WORSHIP. The design of the service is to promote devotional feeling in ourselves and others, and thereby to worship the Great Jehovah; the music, therefore, of which we can avail ourselves, *by which we can best attain this end*, should be employed. The preaching, the manner, imagery, and eloquence of which are calculated to rivet the whole attention of the audience upon itself, and to shade Christ and the soul's everlasting interests in the background, utterly fails as to its professed object; the preacher, not Christ, is proclaimed, at least to that audience. Even so the psalmody, which is such a display of cultivated taste, scientific skill, and artistic execution, as to enrapture the susceptible with the performance and the performers, utterly fails, *in the circumstances*, as

to the noble end of sacred psalmody. It becomes an idol, interposing between God and the heart—a channel, not of devotional feeling, but of sensuous pleasure, so that the very perfection of a performance may occasionally become its imperfection. In Westminster Abbey, and in the Church of the Templars, in London, and in St. Patrick's, in Dublin, may be heard selections from oratorios, performed with admirable skill. In Roman Catholic cathedrals especially, are to be witnessed the highest efforts of musical art. In a late number of the *Christian Treasury*, a tourist thus describes a choral exhibition in the Cathedral of Cologne—"We sat, at the hour of morning mass, in the lofty gallery of the choir. A hundred and fifty feet below, the priests, in glittering vestments, flitted to and fro across the pavement, where the light, admitted through gorgeous pictured glass, spread for them a carpet of rainbow colours. At that elevation, the ear caught their dull monotonous chant only as a distant hum. Presently the fragrance of incense diffused itself through the groined arches, as it rose in dreamy clouds athwart the coloured light; and when the recitatives were finished, the full-voiced choir took up the strain, and waves of music followed waves of incense, till ear, and eye, and soul were floating, as in mid-air, upon a sea of ecstasy :—

"Then swelled the organ : up through choir and nave  
The music trembled with an inward thrill  
Of bliss at its own grandeur ; wave on wave  
*Its* flood of mellow thunder rose, until

The hushed air shivered with the throb it gave;  
Then pausing for a moment, it stood still,  
And sank and rose again, to burst in spray,  
That wandered into silence far away.

"It was the perfection of sensuous delight in music ; the artistic effect could hardly have been heightened ; but the effect was sentimental, not devotional—it was music, not worship—suggestive of man, not of God—ministering to taste, not to edification." The writer's sympathies are evidently with the English refugees, whom he mentions as having found in the Western World, a temple, whose worship was that of free and loving hearts, and whose music was the simple voice of thanksgiving and praise.

But with those qualified and accustomed to engage in this finished choral psalmody, and who have time, and taste, and means to devote to its cultivation and practice, and if their hearts be right with God—a requisite in all cases to acceptable worship—it may be the very perfection of worship, the most efficient means of devotion. By education and practice, they have become proficients, and the service easy. However, though it is desirable to have the highest and best of artistic music, as of all other arts consecrated to the glory of God, its complexity, the difficulty of learning and retaining it—in short, its very perfection renders it unsuitable for "the million"—for the Church in general.

There is another style of music which has been called "**THE DEVOTIONAL.**" In the perfection of this style, should *all* be qualified to worship God.

It is chaste, simple, grave, and suitable; it, too, may be grand and beautiful; it can be quick or slow, soothing or exciting, plaintive or joyous, as the nature of the psalm and as the occasion may demand.

In devotional music, there are the principal melody or air, and the harmony—the latter consisting in the union to the air of one or more additional melodies, to heighten its effect. In this country, congregations generally sing the air: in well-qualified choirs, the members take their proper parts, and thus produce the harmony. **WHICH IS BETTER ADAPTED FOR THE SERVICE OF SACRED SONG?**

Vocal music is generally written in *four parts*, the treble, the alto, the tenor, and the bass—these combined produce harmony. By obligation and interest, the whole worshipping assembly, the whole congregation, is the choir—*the musical instrument*, which the Creator has constructed to produce this harmony, to sound forth simultaneously in their sweetness and power, all these four parts; and so is this living instrument adjusted, that the keys or chords for producing the one part in full perfection cannot, with propriety, be employed to produce another part. To females and youths belongs the *treble*, to men belong the *tenor and bass*, while the *alto* is the province of the high-toned male, or of the deep-toned female voice. Were adult males to take the treble, and females and boys to take the bass, the *law of the instrument* would be violated; but when

each party hold to their own proper part for which the Designer fitted them, we have law and order, and sweet majestic harmony. As psalmody is now managed in congregations generally, the sweet cheerful tones of youth and womanhood are lost to the service, being drowned in the louder treble of the less diffident *lords of the choir*.

The view of the *instrument* just given, I take from *Our Scottish Psalmody*, issued by Free St. George's, Edinburgh, and from *Papers on Psalmody Improvement*, issued by Rosemary Street Sacred Music Association, Belfast. If this view is correct, *harmony is the use of the instrument*, and must, therefore, be better calculated than mere melody to attain the end of congregational psalmody. Besides, a prominent point proposed to be advocated by the *Psalmodist*, a new periodical devoted to the improvement of sacred music, is, that “the singing shall be by the many rather than by the few, and in *harmony of parts*, rather than on the common unison system.”

But whether the preference be given to melody or to harmony, let it ever be borne in mind that “the service of song” is the highest style of Divine worship; that it is for the edification of the Church—the whole Church—which Christ hath purchased with His own blood; and that it should, therefore, be performed in the most efficient and appropriate manner. *To secure this, the congregations of the Church must be roused to take a deep interest in the*

*subject—there are many hindrances to be removed, and defects to be remedied; material of a suitable character alone can be employed in this highest of all earthly exercises; the art of psalmody must be carefully learned, and the spirit of it richly possessed.*

**REQUISITES TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF OUR  
SERVICE OF PRAISE.**

THAT the Church may be roused to her duty and interest in this matter, *psalmody must for a time be a very prominent subject of pulpit ministration*, and afterwards it should manifestly have such a place in the instructions and exhortations of the day of God, as it has assigned to it in the Book of God. How seldom does it occur, that “the all things commanded,” “the whole counsel of God,” is declared by one generation of ministers, or to one generation of Church members. For a long series of years, a very few topics—doctrines and duties—absorb attention, to the exclusion of many others, equally, perhaps, in some cases, more important. In one age good works are insisted on; in another, the doctrine of sovereign grace; at one time, the nature of the Son of God is never mooted; again, for years, the Supreme Deity of the Lord Jesus is proclaimed with the utmost zeal, as the fundamental dogma of the Christian system. How long did the subject of missions remain in abeyance? Now not a month, scarcely a Sabbath, without an appeal in behalf of the destitute cause of Christ. How many

sermons have been preached, and tracts and books written on *prayer*—how few on *praise*? Perhaps some are hoary in the membership of Zion, and have never heard a sermon on praise. What trouble, and toil, and expense, in learning to *preach to men*; and how few of the “royal priesthood” have expended one pound of their money, or one month of their time, in preparing to *sing praise to God*; and yet the latter is at least as important as the former. Considering with what an extensive and costly apparatus the service of praise was provided for in the Old Church, and how frequently and urgently it is commanded, and commended, and exemplified in imposing grandeur in Old Testament history; and also, when well executed, the exhilarating, elevating influence it has upon the people, and especially upon the preacher himself, it is unaccountable that it has so seldom been the theme of a pulpit address, and yet few more pleasing, and, as the Church now is, none more necessary, or calculated to be more profitable.

Having got rid of the general indifference that prevails on the subject of praise, *the next great hindrance to improvement in some congregations are unqualified precentors*. Though nature may never have designed them for the office, or though they may have long outlived their voices, they *kindly* continue to officiate, because a careless people will not make suitable and adequate provision for the service of song in the house of the Lord. It was

after the third failure, on a late occasion, by a good old man—a precentor—and when I was about to go on with another part of the public service, that the congregation, kindly and most opportunely led on by one of their own number, proceeded with the psalmody! The official referred to, did good service, I understand, when young, in his own department; but, at the present time, a stranger could scarcely conjecture what tune he wants to be at, so like is his singing to drawling, pompous reading. Why is not something done in such cases, that the spoiled sacred service of praise might not be a grievance to the serious, and an occasion of mirth to the thoughtless? Society demands trained teachers, the Church demands trained preachers, and I am acquainted with no *reason* why we should not desire and provide trained precentors. Until there be a vigorous move in this direction, no great progress can be made.

*In the psalmody of some churches there is an excess of sound, which should be moderated.* I refer not to the whole congregation, but to the few who have loud sounding timbrels—to the stentors—who can sing, or *will* sing, *treble* only, and who dash right onwards through the service, far above their fellow-worshippers, overwhelming the youths and females, whose province alone the treble is. Let these *lords of the choir* be reminded, that, while they scorn to perform a “*bass part*,” they are *justly chargeable* with a *base* performance in mono-

polising the whole business to themselves, in bellowing down the far sweeter melody of “the weaker vessels.” They are in a strange province, and, while away from home, they should demean themselves modestly and generously ; they should *sing in a calm subdued tone*, and when they return to their own sphere, let them exercise their lungs to the full extent of their ability.

*The service is frequently quite listless*—no heart, no spirit; therefore, compared with the multitude of worshippers, no volume of sound thrown into it. Considering for whose glory, and by whose authority the ordinance is appointed, the countless reasons for being in earnest, the popularity of the exercise, and the express injunction that sacred song shall be sung “*loudly and joyously*,” it is highly unbecoming to sing the language of praise in a lifeless manner, as if our blessings did not furnish adequate grounds of gratitude, nor the character of Jehovah sufficient claims on admiration and love. I fear that a lifeless service is an insult to the God of Zion.

*From this apathetic style comes the indefinite, which slurs the notes and words in such an undecided manner, as to leave the whole service pointless and unintelligible*, and calculated for any purpose rather than mutual edification—one of the ends of Church psalmody. The apostle would “sing with the *understanding*,” i.e., he would employ intelligible words, and he would enunciate these so distinctly that all could hear, and say, “Amen.”

otherwise he would be to the audience “a barbarian.”

*To the apathetic is also to be traced the slow, somniferous, drawling style,* which drags its leaden length along, to the utter exhaustion of ordinary lungs, and to the consternation of the *semibreves*, finding their spacious territories invaded by the daring little *semitones*. Some think this drawling to be more devotional; whereas, the penitential psalms excepted, Zion’s songs and tunes are generally joyous, and to be sung with animation. Between drawling and devotion, there is such resemblance as between bawling and music.

*Our performances are not sufficiently varied, according to the character of the tune.* A joyous air differs little from a plaintive in the style of execution. This is gratingly wrong. As well might glad tidings be announced with tears, and in plaintive tones.

I would say, then, that little improvement in our service of song can be expected, until the hindrances and defects referred to be removed and remedied; until, in short, *our music shall be suited to the service, to the singers, and to the song:*—

1. To *the service* of Jehovah—the Holy One of Israel; to the day of God; to the house of the Lord. It must, therefore, be grave, solemn, dignified, and free from levity.

2. To *the singers*—to the circumstances, and qualifications of the worshippers. Perhaps, of these

the great majority cannot attain to proficiency or ease in complicated music. It must, therefore, be simple, free from intricacy.

3. To the *songs*—to the character of the psalm, or the part of the psalm to be sung. A plaintive air to a plaintive piece; a lively, animated tune to a laudatory, joyous, triumphant piece. The 121st psalm, with all its hope, and confidence, and triumph—

“I to the hills will lift mine eyes,” &c.;

and the 137th, with all its contrition and wailing—

“By Babel’s streams we sat and wept,” &c.,

if sung to the same tune would be utterly incongruous ; and equally inappropriate would it be, to sing the triumph with which some psalms conclude to the same air which gave full and suitable expression to their plaintive, penitential commencement. That it may be suitably and efficiently executed, then,

#### THE ART OF SACRED SONG MUST BE LEARNED.

God requires the service to be performed “*skilfully*.” This Divine injunction can be obeyed only by learning with all diligence. *We must all be taught to sing*. The science of music, as already observed, is perhaps beyond the “reach of the million” in this country, but *practical training* is attainable by all. Each family and congregation will know the means, and time, and place best suited to themselves for such training. To me it appears that it should be

early commenced, and eagerly and regularly pursued, until proficiency be attained. Therefore, I would say—

*Begin in the Nursery.* Let the maternal lullaby, the nurse's recitative, partake largely of Zion's soft melodious tunes ; and then in the domestic or public *infant school*, which is but the nursery on an enlarged scale—let these tunes be associated with the ennobling sentiments, the holy feelings of Zion's sweet songs, or of other pieces of genuine sacred poetry, in the mind, in the memory, when tender and susceptible ; and this music and these holy hymns will remain to elevate, to charm, and refine, when the lessons of riper years have all passed away.

*Proceed in the Day-school.* As it was in ancient Israel with the Levites, and in the schools of the prophets, as in Scotland and other lands of the Reformation, music should be a part of common education. “In Germany, singing and music are taught in the schools generally. Every child is as much expected to read and write and perform music, as to read and write and recite any other lesson.” It is highly commendable that this is beginning to be attended to in “the National Model Schools” of this country. The results are already apparent, and most salutary, in the psalmody of many families, and of some congregations ; and, in a few years, when the teachers generally become qualified to give instructions in this department, it may be expected that the impetus to our ecclesiastical psalmody from

this source will be very great. The delusion is most wickedly prevalent, that the great majority have naturally no taste, *i.e.*, no capacity for singing. How many parents presume that their children were “born tuneless.” Had these children enjoyed as scanty opportunities of hearing conversation, and of being taught to speak, as they have enjoyed of hearing music and of being taught to sing, is it not highly probable that they would be as deficient in *talk*, as they are in *song*. In an orphan asylum in Germany, containing 200 children, only *two* had not learned to sing. “On the 20th of April, 1788, I heard,” says Wesley, “about 1,000 children of the Bolton Sunday-schools, all singing together, and none of them out of tune; nothing could exceed the melody, except the singing of angels in our Father’s house.” Let children have suitable training, *while they are yet young*, and those not qualified to join respectably in the songs of the sanctuary will not exceed one per cent. Upon *Christian* parents, and *Christian* teachers, in the higher ranks, lies a weighty obligation, to consider the influence which music and poetry have over the immortals entrusted to their care. Should not every lesson taught be designed and calculated directly or indirectly to promote the permanent good of the pupil, and the glory of God? If they would only *consider*, I doubt not they would come to the conclusion, that they are called upon to teach those “pieces” of music, and of sacred poetry, which tend to purify, as well as to please—

to save the soul, as well as to satisfy the sense. Why should "marches," "polkas," and "quadrilles," usurp all the time and attention of the pupil, to the exclusion of almost everything of a sacred character? Is it because the music of the former is superior? That scientific musicians would say so, I can scarcely believe—and that mere lovers of music and song, who are the majority in every rank, would say the very reverse, I am persuaded. Is it because the sacred pieces—"Ruth," "The Vital Spark," "I know that my Redeemer liveth," "From Greenland's icy mountains," &c., &c., are not fashionable? Let Christians make them fashionable; and, were they only to consider, they would do so, at least in Christian circles. The beloved and accomplished daughter of ——, a rich and fashionable nobleman, became a most decided and devoted Christian. Her father noticed the change with sorrow and alarm. He tried a number of cunning and costly schemes to win her back to the world's indifference and delusions. They all failed. She continued to love her Saviour and His service. At length it was arranged by the infatuated father and his friends, that a large company of high rank should be assembled, and that on the grand festive occasion, the young ladies should all give a song each, accompanied by the piano. This, according to the principles of the youthful disciple—the intended victim of the evening, was of doubtful propriety. She could not do it with a pure conscience. But,

matters were so concerted, that she must either comply, or give deep offence to her fond father, whom she so dearly loved, and to his distinguished guests. This, also, would be in complete opposition to her principles, and her most anxious wish. Many hearts beat high in hope of victory, and none more anxious and sanguine than his who laid the snare. Several of the fair minstrels had performed their parts triumphantly; and now all in unison call upon Miss —— for her song. In perfect self-possession she took her seat at the piano, ran over its keys, and commenced playing and singing in sweetest, most affecting style, the following stanzas—

“ No room for mirth or trifling here,  
For worldly hope or worldly fear,  
If life so soon is gone:  
If now the Judge is at the door,  
And all mankind must stand before  
The inexorable throne.

“ No matter which my thoughts employ,  
A moment’s misery or joy;  
But oh! when both shall end,  
Where shall I find my destined place?  
Shall I my everlasting days  
With fiends or angels spend? ”

She rose from the instrument, her countenance beaming the softest affection for all—towards her father her full cordial look was that of filial reverence and fondest love. All were subdued. Not a word was spoken. Lord —— was overcome. His daughter wept; but hers were tears of sympathy and joy. From the festive hall, one by one, the

guests retired. Firmness, meekness, love conquerd. It was the crisis in Lord —'s history. The same voice, which, on that trying occasion, had drawn from his heart a sigh, and from his eye an unwelcome tear, sweetly told him of the joys of religion, the loveliness of Jesus. He, too, became a disciple. He lived to the Lord—he died to the Lord. During his brief, bright, Christian course, the cause of Christ received from him half a million of dollars. Let "the daughters of music" consecrate their accomplishments to the glory of God!—See *Christian Treasury*.

*This training should be carried on in the sacred music class.* In all villages and districts where a qualified teacher can be obtained, a music class should be established and attended by all the young persons within convenient distance, for *at least* three months every year. In towns, precentors and other qualified persons can easily devote an hour on some suitable evening in the week, to train the young ; for one hour, employed with spirit and diligence, is better than two of cold, heartless instruction. The minister, and all the earnest office-bearers in the congregation will soon take a deep interest in such a class and give it all encouragement, for by means of it they will find that new life is being infused into all their public worship, and none should feel more interested than the precentor, for he will thus secure to himself the most efficient aid—the whole youth of the church becoming his choir.

*The unceasing seminary for instruction in sacred song is “the church in the house.”* Although the apostle may not have applied this phrase to a family, yet we may, without impropriety, represent a Christian family as a miniature church, with its daily religious ordinances. Of these, one of the most pleasing and important is singing psalms. This service, performed morning and evening, will soon familiarise the whole household to the poetry and music of Zion. An interest in psalmody will thus be generated in “the dwellings of Jacob,” and thence will it soon spread, and tend to a revival of sacred song in the sanctuary. That head of a household, therefore, who neglects the service of praise, morning and evening, sins against God, himself, his family, and his Church.

*Congregational associations*, consisting chiefly of persons who have attained to considerable proficiency in music, are, it appears from the testimony of those who have witnessed the experiment, among the most effective means for giving an impulse to congregational singing. These associations meet weekly for “practisings,” that they may be perfectly prepared for the service of song on the holy Sabbath. Without this, singing in parts cannot be properly conducted. For how many would this weekly meeting be a pleasure? and when the improvements that would result from it to the public service of God are taken into consideration, doubtless, devoted Christians will feel it to be their duty.

By means of these weekly "practisings," by church associations, females and youths are prepared to sing their part with *vigour* and success, for the treble is the foundation of good singing. If it be feeble and languid, the whole performance will be imperfect. Besides, were this system adequately carried out, as it is in Germany, the precentor would become the teacher of sacred music during the week,<sup>1</sup> not the leader of the congregation on the Sabbath, as with us at present. The members of this association, scattered through all parts of the house, each would form a little band of singers round himself, and by his guidance and example, would contribute to the improvement and the general performance of the service of praise in the church.

To this all our recommendations tend. To glorify God, with alacrity and effect, in the psalmody of the *Sabbath sanctuary*, is the great and worthy object to be attained by all this training and practising. The efficient discharge of the duty *here* should, therefore, be kept in view throughout the whole course. For here, "in Zion" especially,

<sup>1</sup> The following suggestions, by the Committee on Psalmody, presented to the Assembly at its last meeting, are fraught with importance; and I do hope that the Church will soon be roused to attend to them:—"That an institution be established for training young men as precentors. That students for the ministry be taught the principles of sacred music. That in all congregational schools sacred music shall form part of the ordinary education. That a competent teacher be employed to deliver lectures on psalmody, and to organise classes throughout the Church." And, I would add, that the attention of Sabbath-school teachers be specially turned to *this most interesting* and important subject.

"praise waits for God." Not when prayer was offered by the royal suppliant, but when praise was presented by the myriad choir of Israel, did the glory of God fill the Temple. In the Sabbath sanctuary, also, the world hears, and some of its votaries perhaps join in the exercise. Should not the desire and effort of the Church, therefore, be, if they fail thus to win the world, that they may at least afford no occasion for contempt or ridicule. In however homely a style the service be conducted in the private circle—at the family altar—it should be performed "skilfully," respectably, in "the house of the Lord."

Nor can any acquainted with the Bible view of the subject suppose that, in thus attending to "the service of song," they are doing but a trifling, a minor service to the cause of Christ. Luther laboured hard in this work, because he held that, though the public preaching of the Gospel should utterly be suppressed, the prevalence of psalm-singing would sustain and propagate the vital truths of religion. Perhaps the Reformer has put the case too strongly; but I think it will be generally granted that we imbibe much Scriptural sentiment, and, if the musical part of the worship be suitably conducted, as much of devotional feeling from the psalmody as from the sermon; and if there is preparation in the Church below for the employments and enjoyments of the Church above, in psalmody, more directly than in any other devotional exercise, is that pre-

paration to be attained. In short, the training which I urge, that we may secure considerable proficiency in the art of sacred music, is indispensable, if, in the service of song, *we would worship God at all*; for as a knowledge of the psalm is requisite to the precentor, that he may not have the tune and the psalm antagonistic to each other, the one plaintive and the other joyous, or *vice versa*, so, on the part of those who would join in the service devotionally, a knowledge of the music is necessary, that their whole attention may be given to the religious object in view, and that they may not be distracted with apprehension, and watching, lest they commit a musical blunder.

## THE PSALMODIC MATERIAL.

PSALMS, PARAPHRASES, AND HYMNS—WHICH SHOULD BE USED<sup>¶1</sup>

HAVING said so much on the musical material, a few remarks must suffice on the *psalmody material* to be employed in the service of song. Some Churches use "The Book of Psalms" only, some use "The Psalms" and "The Paraphrases," and some "Hymns" almost exclusively; and, notwithstanding their want of uniformity in this particular, if they maintain the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, these are all recognised as true Christian Churches. So that, however parties may theorise

<sup>¶1</sup> See Note A., Appendix.

on this subject, it does not seem in reality to be of vital importance in the esteem of any, provided the sacred songs be pure Gospel truth. I ask the loose hymning party for *proof* that God has authorised any other than the Book of Psalms in His *public* service of praise—the answer fails to satisfy. I ask the tight-laced psalm-singer, who would stop his ears and run were a paraphrase announced, for *proof* that God has confined the Church of the present to the psalms used by the Church of the past dispensation—the answer fails to satisfy. I can commit myself to neither exclusively. I must use a psalm or a paraphrase in *public* worship as I think best for edification; and the hymn, which is true poetry and pure truth, I will rejoice to hear sweetly sung in the *private* social circle. With my present impressions, then, “The Psalms” and “The Paraphrases” alone could I employ in the public worship of God.

“THE BOOK OF PSALMS,” though usually called “The Psalms of David,” is the production of some twenty authors, and was composed at different dates, ranging over a period of nearly a thousand years, from Moses to the captivity.

The Church of Scotland, though yielding to none in her reverence for the Book of Psalms, and using it weekly in her public worship, desired to have a collection which would furnish her congregations with sacred songs of kindred sentiments and feelings with the sermons just delivered, that the impressions

might thus be deepened and strengthened, the old Psalms not supplying a suitable number of *consecutive* verses for this purpose. One line, or one verse, could be easily found perfectly appropriate, the very next, it may be, quite foreign to the object. The Assembly accordingly, in 1742, appointed a committee to attend to this matter. The "Translations and Paraphrases, in Verse, of Several Passages of Sacred Scripture," the result of their lengthened labours, were finally sanctioned by the supreme court, in 1781, "to be used in public worship, when the minister finds it for edification." These paraphrases, like the psalms, are the production of various authors. They underwent many alterations and revisions before they assumed the form in which they now appear. Their introduction, though not satisfactory to all, was soon generally acquiesced in. *Hymns*, I believe, almost exclusively, are used by Methodists, Baptists, Independents, and others, in England and America.

Practically, a small collection of sacred songs is found to suffice. Of our 217 psalms and paraphrases, how few have many of us sung? and these few universal favourites, I presume, we will continue to sing, because we *feel* them to be most suitable to our souls and our service; and all are familiar with them, so that we can employ them in worship without distraction. Such acquaintance, on the part of the people, generally, with a large and continually increasing collection

of hymns, however true and sublime, cannot be reasonably expected.

Of no department of her charge should the Church be more watchful than of the sacred songs employed in her service; for these wield a powerful influence, for good or evil, over the minds, the creed, the character of the people. The question, therefore, is important—

*Should “The Book of Psalms” alone be employed, or may the Church use other suitable portions of the Divine Word, freely translated into metre, in her public service of song?*

The advocates for the exclusive use of the psalms argue that they were given by inspiration; that they were given to be sung by the Church in every succeeding age; that no book or books were written by inspiration for the same purpose; and that they are as well adapted to the Christian as to the Jewish Church. That inspired songs are necessary, is evident from the fact that they were given; and that no other sacred songs are necessary to the Church, is evident from the fact that no portion of the Old or New Testament is given in the metrical form, and designed for public worship; that the “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs,” mentioned by the Apostle, are all contained in “The Book of Psalms;” some of these, in the Septuagint Translation, being headed “*psalm*,” some “*ode*” or song, and some “*halleluiah*,” or hymn, and all called “The Word of Christ” by the Apostle; that many

of the psalms represent ceremonial requirements as vain, and spiritual sacrifices as the all-important, and that they are all fragrant of Christ ;<sup>1</sup> that every utterance of devotion, from the loftiest praise to the lowliest penitence, finds here a place ; that, in this "Epitome of the Bible," everything we can conceive of, as belonging to the Divine glory, or to the Christian's experience, is embodied ; the outer universe of God and the inner universe of man are here alike unfolded ; all that can alarm the wicked, revive the penitent, console the afflicted, and confirm the saint, is found in this comprehensive book."<sup>2</sup>

Such are the prominent arguments for the exclusive use of "The Psalms" in the public praise of the Church. The advocate for the use of both psalms and paraphrases, sanctioned by the Church of Scotland, disputes very few of the points presented. GRANTED, that the *original* of the Psalms is inspired, so is the *original* of those portions of the Bible paraphrased. Metrical translations must partake in some degree of the nature of a paraphrase, and, though an adequate exhibition of the Divine mind in the passage, must, like all man's works, be more or less imperfect. The difference between the psalms and the paraphrases, then, is simply one of degree—the one partaking more of the nature of a paraphrase than the other ; and as to the *metrical form* of the originals, the psalms

<sup>1</sup> Sommerville's "Exclusive Claims of the Psalms."    <sup>2</sup> T. L. Cuyler.

and some of the paraphrases are on a par, these latter being free translations of poetical parts of the Old Testament Scriptures. (See Lowth on Isaiah.)

GRANTED, also, that the Book of Psalms was given to Israel for praise; but still, evidence that the Church of Israel, and of all succeeding ages, was by Divine authority limited to that book as the material of praise, is a desideratum. Hezekiah's command, enjoining a portion of the book—"The Songs of David and of Asaph"—and the divinely-sanctioned use of the other collection, making up the whole "Book of Psalms," would be, in my opinion, decisive, as to "their exclusive claims," were there satisfactory evidence that the Apostolic Church, and the immediately post-Apostolic Church, confined their praises to the Jewish Psalter; but, in the facts, that the Israelites themselves often praised God in songs not contained in their psalmatical liturgy—that the redeemed Church praised God and the Lamb in songs which have no place in the Jewish collection—that, in the apostolic age, God gave prophets, whom the Spirit qualified to utter "*a psalm*," not an old one, as is evident from the context—and that their pagan foes represented the early Christians as singing hymns to Christ as God, the evidence that the Church, when peculiarly under Divine superintendence, used only "The Book of Psalms" in praise, is greatly weakened, if not destroyed.

Besides, there are given to the Church INSPIRED

PRAYERS, most suitable and sublime, some in verse and some in prose, some in the Book of Psalms, and some in other parts of God's Word. Must the Church, in her public services, be confined to these inspired prayers, as well as to the inspired psalms? or by what authority is she loosed from the one and bound to the other? What reliable evidence is there that God gave the one as the only material for praise, and not the other as the exclusive form for prayer? Would not the argumentation in behalf of the exclusive claims of the inspired psalms be as decisive in behalf of the exclusive claims of the inspired prayers, especially as the Divine Author of one of these prayers has prefixed to it the words—"When ye pray, SAY, 'Our Father which art in heaven,'" &c.—a command as precise and authoritative as that for "praising God in the words of David and Asaph," issued on a special occasion by Hezekiah the king, and the princes?" Though Jesus issued this precept, His apostles and the Church universal, and especially the advocates of the exclusive claims of the psalms, have considered that obedience is fully rendered to it by taking that prayer, not as "*a form*," but as a model; and He himself, when a suppliant addressing God, justifies this interpretation by using other words. And why should the Divine command by Hezekiah and the princes, respecting the Songs of David and Asaph, be more strictly interpreted than the command of Christ regarding

prayer? Had Jesus or any inspired ambassador uttered the mandate, "When ye praise God, sing The Book of Psalms," it would furnish a strong argument for their exclusive claims; yet, if He or the Apostolic Church had subsequently praised God in language not recorded in "The Psalms," different from the prescribed forms, we would thence learn that the Church is justified in using the psalms, as she is accustomed to use the prayers referred to.

As to the ADAPTATION of the psalms to be employed by the Church in her service of song on every occasion, and in every age, no man dare question it, if it be so, that God has clothed them with an exclusive claim. But while the divinity of that claim is doubted, may it not with propriety be asked—Are there not some of the psalms—fraught as these are with local, and temporary, and ceremonial terms and references—less intelligible, and not so highly appreciated by the great mass of worshippers, as some inspired—especially New Testament—passages, metrically paraphrased, according, as these do, with our *whole worship*—the sacraments, and prayers, and preaching, and generally the reading? True, by a *lucid* explanation, and a sustained mental effort, we may clothe even these psalms with a Gospel garb, and find in them a Gospel meaning; but to the many this will be a difficulty, and in proportion to the difficulty will the devotion of the service be diminished.

The objections to those called “The Imprecatory Psalms” are generally made without adequate consideration. Their spirit is exhibited in the New as well as in the Old Testament ; and in proportion as we are conformed to the character of the God of infinite purity, and justice, and love, will we be prepared to sympathise with the sin-abhorring and sin-avenging Judge, and to pray, along with the redeemed in heaven and upon earth, in all fervency, “Overturn, overturn, every malicious foe, every incorrigible opponent of Christ, and of His cause !” Perhaps the occasions on which these psalms should be sung are rare ; but when they do occur, zeal for the glory of Christ, and the triumph of His kingdom, will prompt the feeling ; and to God our prayer must ascend against His enemies.

Many of the psalms throughout, and portions of many others, are permanently adapted to the Church universal, and to every private Christian. In the words of these, the sorrow and the joy, the faith and the fears, the hopes and the resolves, of the children of God will continue to ascend, in praise and in prayer, till the end of time. Notwithstanding, as I have already said, there are many Scriptural passages, which, for prayer and praise, occupy, in the esteem of multitudes of pious people, as high a level ; and with regard to the propriety of employing them, and not *always* the *psalms* of the old dispensation, it may safely be

concluded that the example of the redeemed in heaven cannot lead far astray.

My object in thus trying to state the case between those who use the psalms *alone* in praise and those who use both the psalms and paraphrases, sanctioned by the Church of Scotland, is, that neither party may despise, nor be offended with the other, seeing, as each must do, that an explicit "Thus saith the Lord," is not easily found to satisfy or silence their opponents, and that nothing else can or should.

But, however suitable our musical and psalmody material, that God may be glorified in our songs of praise,

#### THE SPIRIT OF PRAISE MUST BE RICHLY POSSESSED.

"For never harp nor lyre revealed  
Such music as new hearts can yield ;  
Renewed by grace and tuned by love,  
Their harmony ascends above."

A spirit according with the character of the sacred song should take full possession of the singer; there should be a glowing sympathy with the psalm, as well as with the music. Then will the service be IN EARNEST, not a mere musical exercise, not an offering of sound, but of the soul—the eye, the countenance, as well as the voice, speaking; the whole man—both body and spirit, which are God's, will be thrown into the service, when the spirit of praise is thus richly enjoyed. When the soul is full of devotional feeling, thoroughly

in earnest, silence in the sanctuary is impossible, praise is a necessity, emotion will vent itself. In their Father's house, " beholding His beauty," God's children sing because "*they cannot help it.*" Hence, in seasons of revival, the whole congregation, with one heart and voice, send up their loud hosannahs to the God whom they adore, powerfully influencing and elevating each other, deepening Divine impressions upon their souls, and making Jehovah's praise glorious. In the absence of this spirit of praise, the musical performance may be blameless, enchanting ; but the hearts of the performers will be cold to Christ, careless about His cause. The chief of sinners may be the chief of singers, and the corruptions of his heart interfere but little with the music of his voice, or the sweetness of his song. But, however faultlessly performed, psalmody, without the spirit of it, will, to the souls of the performers, be an unprofitable service. To those who are without this spirit, and a deep sense of their need of it, who are living in sin, and living in song in the house of the Lord, however sweet and simple their melodies, however elaborate and exquisite their anthems, God's language is, " Take away from me the *noise* of your songs, for I will not hear the melody of your viols;" whereas, to those singers who are themselves living songs of praise, between whose souls and the songs of Zion there is a sweet sympathy, whose heart and life are in harmony with each other, and with God, whose " robes of adorn-

ing" are "the beauties of holiness," God's language of encouragement and promise is, "Sing, O daughter of Zion; be glad and rejoice with all thy heart." "The Lord thy God is in the midst of thee; He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love; He will joy over thee with *singing*."

Ponder well the weighty words of the great American divine (Edwards)—"As it is commanded of God that all should sing, *so all should make conscience of learning to sing*, as it is a thing that cannot be done decently without learning. Those, therefore, who neglect to learn to sing, *live in sin*, as they neglect what is necessary to their attending one of the ordinances of God's worship."

Another requisite to the complete efficiency of the service is, that it be performed in the *standing attitude*. This I shall consider in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER IV.

ZION'S SACRIFICE OF PRAISE SHOULD  
BE PRESENTED TO GOD IN THE POS-  
TURE OF REVERENCE AND OF MUSICAL  
POWER.

"I beseech you by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies *a living sacrifice, which is your reasonable service.*"—PAUL.

"Mere bodily *rest* is NO PART of God's worship."—OWENS.

LET it be borne in mind that psalmody is a devo-  
tional as well as a musical exercise, and that the  
grand object of the service is to glorify God and to  
edify the Church. It has already been maintained  
that the music best adapted to attain this end  
should be employed. I now proceed to inquire in  
what *bodily posture* this appropriate music may be  
most efficiently rendered. Even in this age of  
postures and impostures, I think this inquiry not  
unimportant; for it is notorious that the best  
weapons, imperfectly wielded, can do very little  
execution—that the best sermons, unnaturally de-  
livered, are almost lost—and that to listen to some  
airs, perpetrated in the Divine service, though in  
themselves among the noblest and the best, it is a  
*penance.* If there is an attitude, therefore, to which



the musical service of the sanctuary can be better performed than in any other, it is important to know it, and a duty to assume it. The psalmody of the Church is a work of the noblest kind, yielding the highest glory to God, and the greatest advantage to man. It is not enough that the heart is right, the motives pure; that we are quite sincere in the work; we want to honour our gracious Jehovah, to edify His Church—cared for as the apple of the eye; we want to rise to a full sympathy with God, to secure His promised and precious rewards, to be beatified with His approbation, hailed at the end of our pilgrimage with His eulogistic welcome, “WELL DONE;” and for attaining to all this, we are furnished with talents and opportunities, which are to be “occupied,” not in any way that indolence or caprice may suggest, but in the best possible manner. I hold, then, that

STANDING IS THE PROPER ATTITUDE IN SINGING  
THE DIVINE PRAISE.

I. THE RATIONAL ARGUMENT.

APART from the testimony of Scripture in the meantime, I argue that the duty can thus be better done, that it is the attitude of reverence, and that advantages result from it to the other services of the sanctuary.

1. *The service can thus be better performed, because*

*the vocal powers can be more efficiently employed.* The *larynx* at the top of the *trachea*, or windpipe, is the vocal organ. It is wonderfully lined with delicate membranes, "so stretched, that the air passing through them, makes a sound as through the reed of a clarionet." It is also furnished with cartilages, which contract and expand the cavity at pleasure in different ways, so as to give different vibrations, and, of course, different tones. Thus almost every human being is furnished with a musical instrument of exquisite delicacy, having a compass of from two to three octaves, and commanding all requisite varieties of tone, semitone, &c. The *windpipe*, as it descends, is divided into branches, called *bronchea*, which terminate in the lungs. The *diaphragm* is a large strong muscle, separating the cavity of the abdomen from the thorax. By its contraction, and by the action of smaller muscles between the ribs, is the cavity of the chest enlarged, and air inhaled to fill the void, and by their relaxing is the cavity contracted, and the air expelled. The organs of respiration that I have mentioned are those chiefly brought into play in singing; and I think it will be manifest to any one who considers the internal structure of the chest, and the process of respiration, that the posture of the musician's body, especially of his neck and chest, must very materially affect his voice. In the easy sitting posture, the body is *more or less curved*, the *bronchea*, or lower tubes

of the windpipe, are curved, and thereby straitened, the action of the diaphragm and intercostal muscles is interfered with, the full expansion of the chest, and free full respiration are impeded, and to the extent of this hindrance will the voice be injured, whether for singing or for public speaking. Whereas, in the *standing posture*, the neck—the channel of sound—is straight, the bronchea are quite open, the respiratory organs are unrestrained, the lungs have free and full play, the whole body is erect, the inhaling and emission of air are unimpeded, the entire vocal powers of the instrument can consequently be exercised without let or hindrance. Hence, I presume, it is that all public speakers, all precentors, all choirs, and all professional singers stand at their performances. The most popular orator<sup>1</sup> of our day declares that the secret of his ability to speak with such frequency, and at such length, without being fatigued to any great extent, is, that "*he stands as straight as a reeling-stick.*" To enjoy a full, hearty respiration, does not every one know that he straightens the chest, and almost bends backward, that the expansion may be altogether unimpeded, and the cavity for the admission of air as enlarged as possible? Nor can it have escaped notice, that, when a congregation accustomed to sit at psalmody, are induced, on some special occasion, to stand at the solemn service, there is manifest to all a spirit, a power, a rapture

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Dr. Cooke, Belfast.

in their performance, far beyond what the same parties can ever produce in the sitting posture. Every man, with a voice and an ear, can judge of this matter for himself. Musicians are the best judges, I therefore submit the following testimonies, kindly furnished to me by professional gentlemen, who have dedicated their time and talents to the study and teaching of music; and with the opinion expressed by these, a large number of others, with whom I have conversed on the subject, fully agree.

TESTIMONY OF MUSICIANS AS TO THE POSTURE IN  
PRAISE.

I.

The first statement is from Mr. Turle, of the cathedral choir, Armagh. He says:—

“There can be no question but that singers have a greater command over their voice standing in an erect position. When sitting, the chest and lungs have not the same freedom of action, and most undoubtedly the singers should always stand during the choral service.”

II.

The next is from Wm. V. Barry, Esq., professor of music, Belfast. He says:—

“I am decidedly of opinion—and so I should think are all professional persons—that *singing is more efficiently performed in the standing than in the sitting posture*. When sitting, the neck droops, the chest is more or less contracted, and the viscera are pressed up against the lungs, the combined result of which is, imperfect tone and feeble-

ness of intonation. In my own experience, I observe the most remarkable difference between tones produced by pupils when sitting and when standing. Besides, where there is a regularly trained choir, the singers, conscious of the most effective method of rendering their music, *invariably stand* while they perform it. There can be no doubt that those congregations which stand when singing *sing better than those which sit.*"

## III.

The following is from Augustus Wehrhan, Esq., professional musician, and author of some able communications to the *Dublin University Magazine* on music. After some pertinent remarks upon the devotional bearing of this question, he goes on to say :—

" This subject, however, assumes a different aspect when contemplated from a purely *musical point* of view. Singing is the climax, and most energetic mode of utterance. The whole being—and not merely the reflective and contemplative powers of man—is excited when he adopts this mode of expression ; and it is pretty clear that an emotion which seizes the whole man must powerfully affect his bodily attitude. I rise to my feet—I move my arms—I throw back my head, when excited with passion, or stirred by some strong impulse. I look up to heaven—I lift up my hands—I raise up my whole body, in fervent adoration and in longing ardent desire, when I would hold near communion with my Father above—when my thoughts ascend to that place where, according to my impression, the Eternal dwells. The orator starts to his feet when the tide of emotion or enthusiasm swells in his bosom ; and could the enraptured singer sit when the fulness of his being pants to be free, and to find a sympathetic resonance

in sound ? and in standing up, both the speaker and the singer unconsciously assume that attitude which is most favourable to a full and powerful utterance of those feelings that move within. The respiratory organs are less impeded in their action, the channel through which the compressed air escapes, and the renovating breath of life gushes into the system, is straighter and more expanded, the muscles of the larynx play with greater freedom and precision, the resounding cavity of the mouth assumes a form more favourable to the consolidation and propulsion of sound. Thus it is that the singer who sings ‘with all his heart’ must naturally feel inclined to rise, and that a *musician*, from a professional point of view, cannot have the least hesitation to declare that *the standing posture is the most suitable as far as regards purity, resonance, and power of utterance.*”

## IV.

*From T. M. HUNTER, esq., Teacher of Music, Edinburgh.*

“DEAR SIR,—In answer to your inquiry, I beg to say that singing, as a musical exercise, will be far better performed in the standing than in the sitting posture. I have always found it of advantage to my pupils to have them standing the greater part of a lesson hour. The diaphragm exerts a great influence over the vocal organs, and standing is certainly the best position any person can assume who wishes to gain that freedom of action necessary to the full development of the voice.—Yours truly,

“T. M. HUNTER.

“Rev. S. J. Moore.”

## V.

*From JAMES LEE, esq., of the Armagh Cathedral Choir.*

“REV. SIR,—As far as the beneficial effects of standing while singing go, I will state to you some of the reasons given by the highest and most experienced masters. 1st.

The singer, in order to have perfect command of his voice, must have the free use of his chest, which is not so much the case in sitting as standing. 2d. The more perfect and finished the singer is, the more particular is he about the supply of breath, which requires the whole of the chest to be *well* filled. By this he produces a much better *quality* of sound, and also with greater ease to himself.

"The best masters agree in saying that a free and graceful position, either in singing or playing, contributes very much to the elegant performance of any piece ; and position (the standing one) is the very first lesson given. Were I teaching individually, I would invariably do the same ; but from the length of the lesson and the amount of time taken up with the rudiments (which can be as well learned while sitting), I do not enforce it in classes.—I am, rev. sir, your obedient servant,

"JAMES LEE."

VI.

J. Davis, Esq., Dublin, vocalist and lecturer on music, in answer to some inquiries which I put to him on this subject, has the following :—

"I cannot account for it that the reformed churches so generally sit while singing in public worship, unless that they wish, even in the attitude of worship, to be as far removed as propriety would allow from the Catholics. But the Episcopal, and a large number of Presbyterian congregations in this country do now stand when singing. I always stand when singing pieces to illustrate my lectures ; for when the body is curved in the sitting posture, the lungs can no more take in a full inspiration than a pair of bellows could do, if chained down to half their compass. Besides, the voice loses in sweetness and distinctness, as well as in power. In fact, by curving the chest and neck, and shutting the teeth, the vocal organs, and their *Maker*,

are unfairly treated. The full power of the instrument is not brought into exercise, and He who formed it is not dealt fairly by."

## VII.

*From JOHN WILLIS, esq., Professor of Music, Belfast.*

"REV. SIR,—In answer to your inquiry, I beg to state that, so far as quantity and quality of tone are concerned, there can be no possibility of doubt but that singing can be more efficiently performed in the *standing* position. Preachers and public speakers stand when addressing an audience, and all singers, when *wishing to do their best*, stand also. In Dr. Morgan's church, and in Mr. Macnaughtan's, and Mr. Hamilton's, where I have large classes, we invariably stand when *we wish to produce a strong and good effect*. Why do the choirs in all our churches stand, but to produce a large quantity of tone? It is habit—nay, rather prejudice—a reluctance "to do otherwise than my father did," that is the cause of healthful people sitting when God is being worshipped in praise.—I am, rev. sir, respectfully yours,

"J. WILLIS."

TESTIMONY OF PHYSICIANS AS TO THE POSTURE OF  
MUSICAL POWER.

## I.

*From ALEXANDER GORDON, esq., M.D., Professor of Practice of Surgery, Queen's College, Belfast.*

" . . . To the question—Can a person sing as well in the sitting as in the standing posture? I answer *he cannot*, as the sitting attitude interferes more or less with the free action of the diaphragm. The immediate seat of the voice is in the larynx, palate, &c.; but these organs *must have a sufficient supply of air to modulate the notes*;

therefore, the free action of the diaphragm, and the other muscles of the chest, is absolutely necessary. The sitting posture impedes more or less, but the erect posture affords every facility for, the free play of all the organs engaged in singing.

“ALEXANDER GORDON, M.D.”

### II.

*From JAMES MILLER, ESQ., M.D., F.R.S.E., Professor of Surgery in the University of Edinburgh.*

“There can be no doubt whatever that, as far as regards the comfort of the singer, and the excellence of the music, standing is decidedly the more favourable posture.

“JAMES MILLER, F.R.S.E.”

### III.

*From GEORGE DICKIE, ESQ., A.M., M.D., Professor of Natural History, Queen's College, Belfast.*

“From the construction of the respiratory and vocal organs, I am of opinion that singing can be more efficiently executed in the standing posture.

“GEORGE DICKIE, A.M., M.D.”

## THE TESTIMONY OF MINISTERS AS TO THE ATTITUDE IN WHICH GOD SHOULD BE WORSHIPPED IN THE SERVICE OF SONG.

### I.

*From REV. JAMES DENHAM, D.D., Derry.*

“ . . . To sit at singing and prayer, as many churches do, I need scarcely say I think to be altogether wrong, and, moreover, unscriptural.

“JAMES DENHAM, D.D.”

## II.

*From REV. JOHN BARNETT, D.D., Moneymore.*

“ . . . For many years my own congregation has been accustomed to stand when worshipping God in psalmody. I must think that standing is a much more *seemly* posture than sitting when offering direct homage to God; and one good resulting from it, which I have observed at home and abroad is, that many are prompted to join in the exercise who, when they sat, never opened their mouths at all.

“ JOHN BARNETT, D.D.”

## III.

*From REV. WILLIAM GIBSON, Professor of Christian Ethics in the Presbyterian College, Belfast, and Convener of the Assembly's Committee for the Improvement of Psalmody.*

“ . . . I willingly give you the weight of my sanction (be the same more or less) to the doctrine which asserts the superiority of the *standing* to the sitting posture in singing, as better calculated to give full development to the vocal powers. It is well known that all professional singers stand, doubtless for this reason.

“ WILLIAM GIBSON.”

## IV.

*From REV. WILLIAM C. M'CULLAGH, Minister of the Presbyterian Church, Ballysillan, Belfast, and Member of the Assembly's Committee for the Improvement of Psalmody.*

“ It is my decided conviction, founded on the experience and observation of years, that *singing cannot be at all efficiently performed in the sitting posture*. The reasons are

obvious. In order to the production of a proper volume of sound, the muscles of the chest require a certain expansion, so that the lungs, which are to the human voice what bellows are to an organ, may have full play. Now, without entering upon the anatomical structure of the human frame, to show that this cannot be effected unless the body be in an erect posture, I think every man of discernment will agree with me that the sitting attitude is not at all adapted to the proper development of the voice, for the reasons already stated. From this it follows that sitting at praise tends to check and keep down the vocal capabilities, and accordingly the music produced in that posture is by no means so full and melodious as it ought to be. Hence, I have found, by a close and careful comparison of churches which adopt the standing posture, and those which observe the sitting posture, when singing the praises of God, that the volume of music produced by the former as much exceeds that of the latter, as the full swell of an organ exceeds the tone of the same instrument when a number of the stops are repressed. My opinion is confirmed by the practice of all distinguished vocalists. In the grand sacred music concerts given in London, Birmingham, and elsewhere, the standing posture is adopted, not for ostentation, as many suppose, but, in reality, for the purpose of doing full justice to the musical capacities of the performers. Why, then, should not we, when joining in "the service of song in the house of the Lord," put forth *all* the vocal powers with which He may have blessed us. My congregation stand while singing, and I do sincerely wish that all the congregations of the Assembly would adopt the same practice. In a few Sabbaths they would discover the good effects of it in their psalmody worship. I may add that it is my custom to meet once or twice a week with a *number of my young people*, in my own manse, for the practice of sacred music, and so particularly anxious am I on the subject of posture, that I oblige them to stand during the per-

formance of each psalm or sacred piece, though the time of our practising, each evening, occupies nearly two hours.

- By this means I am enabled to find out what each voice, and what all the voices combined are capable of, and I regulate my instructions accordingly.

“WILLIAM C. MCCULLAGH.”

The preceding and the following, the last, and in no respect the least—testimony on the subject discussed, I value very highly, because they are from two young ministers of our Church, who are highly accomplished in the service of music ; and who, as stated by one of them, and true I understand also respecting the other, are generously employing their musical acquirements in training the young of their respective congregations, to conduct “the service of song in the house of the Lord” with taste and efficiency, and with pleasure and profit to all concerned.

v.

*From REV. ISAIAH N. HARKNESS, Minister of the First Presbyterian Church, Stewartstown.*

“It is fresh in our recollection what a royal struggle there was around the “Old Twelve” tunes. To attack them was to assail the bulwarks of Zion ; to add to them, the most flagrant heresy.

“The times of this ignorance, that God winked at, have gone. We now see, and we are ashamed of it, that prejudice—stupid, fanatical, bigoted—was a great general in that war.

“Alas ! the general is still alive, and leading on his soldiers in other campaigns.

*"People sit when they praise God ! Yes—however amazing it may be, it is positively true, that whole congregations, with one consent, attempt to celebrate the glory of God in lofty song, sitting upon their seats !! !*

"One naturally asks, are they lame, rheumatic, crippled, infirm ? Oh, no ; they are stalwart and strong, hale and sound as any need be.

"Posture in praise is not everything—it is not even a principal thing; but it is something. The heart it is that praises God, and if that be right, adoration is rendered, whatsoever be the attitude of the body. But order, propriety, science, art, Scripture, are to be consulted and followed. If, when the psalm was given out, instead of sitting, *you were to lie down on the floor at length*, and sing it thus—the argument that 'God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth,' would scarcely exempt you from universal and righteous ridicule. *That posture is best which can be defended by the best arguments.* You sit—what arguments can you advance for that ? None, unless it be that where you sit now, your fathers sat before you. Can you bring Scripture ? You stand aghast. Can you adduce the laws of vocal art ? You are speechless. Can you say it is decent and becoming ? Even common propriety disarms you.

"Against this sitting posture at praise there are the following things :—

"I. THIS POSTURE IS NOT WARRANTED BY THE WORD OF God. It is not there. Such a thing as a congregation deliberately sitting down to praise Jehovah is undiscoverable in sacred story. 'The Levites *stood up* to praise the Lord God of Israel.' At the dedication of the Temple, when Levites and priests joined to praise the Lord, for His mercy endureth for ever, it is added, as if to draw our attention specially to it—'AND ALL ISRAEL STOOD.' Even in heaven they are represented, when they sing, *standing* on the sea of glass. Attitude is not always mentioned, but whenever

it is, there is one posture, and one only, recorded—‘THEY STOOD.’

“II. THIS POSTURE IS AGAINST THE LAWS OF VOCAL ART. Don’t be alarmed if we should speak of an organ. It is a work of man, and a very grand work, indeed. In this case we will only employ it for illustration. You see it is a wind instrument. The sound is produced by currents of air, as it is in the forests, or in the roar of the storms around your chimney tops. These bellows, worked out of view, provide the necessary currents; these gilded pipes, through which the currents pass, produce the necessary sounds. How may you destroy the efficiency of this majestic instrument? Most easily; *confine the bellows* that they cannot work freely, *bend the pipes*, that the air may be *improperly* impeded; your evil work is done. The instrument will wheeze, squeak, produce now a true note, now a false one, burst into a sudden roar, then die out with awful rapidity, and perform such extraordinary things, that you will be ready to fly from it in horror.

“Now, your body is one great, grand, awe-striking organ—fearfully and wonderfully made. It has upon it the seal of the Eternal—the marks of its Divine artificer. To use this heaven-made instrument in such a way as to cramp its powers, is impiety; you are profaning sacred things. Now, observe, the Lord has provided in it machinery for collecting a reservoir of air—the lungs. They are concealed from view. Hamper their action, you are doing an evil work. *They must be free.* Passing upwards from them, out to the mouth, is the *one* tube, which, by the skill of the Creator, is made to supply the place of *the many*. Cramp, twist, embarrass this tube in its action, it is all the same as if you bent, twisted, cramped, not *one*, but *all* the pipes of the organ of human make. It is essential to the correct formation of musical sounds, and the correct rendering of musical strains, that the posture adopted should be that which *gives the lungs most liberty*, and least interferes with the

minute and varied movements of this single tube, and the passage of the air currents through it. And hence, what are the instructions given, when masters want to make good vocalists, or even passable ones ? They are such as these —‘Keep the body straight, if anything, slightly leaning backward; throw the shoulders back and the chest forward; lean the head a little back, elevate slightly the mouth and chin.’

“Now, any man can see that these can be done, and done easily, properly, gracefully, when you stand. This is so plain a matter, that to argue it would be a mere waste of words. But *can they be done while you sit?* Come now, O man of reason and observation, can the objects above specified, and the instructions above recorded, be accomplished and observed by people who are squatting on their seats ? Try. Why—don’t you observe that while you sit your lungs are subject to a pressure *FROM BENEATH* ? And this, by no mortal contrivance, can you prevent, as long as you sit ; the pressure is only removed when you stand. Again, still sitting, attempt to throw back your body, shoulders, head, &c., according to the laws of musical art, what will follow ? If you are in a straight-backed, high-panelled pew, *you can’t do it.* If there be no back to your seat, there is a danger of your losing your equilibrium, overbalancing yourself, and bringing your mellifluous strains to a rather inglorious termination. If, however, you can succeed—if your dorsal muscles are so powerful as to prevent the probable catastrophe, you are strained, you are not free, you are in a position that has these two disadvantages —*it is dreadfully uncomfortable, and it is most ungainly.* No man can sing well unless he is *at ease* ; and no man can, while sitting, put himself into what I may call the musical posture, and feel at ease at the same time. And what is the consequence ? It is this, that by no sedentary congregations are these vocal rules observed. Look at them. They bend forwards, they bend sideways, they lean on their

elbows, they lounge in the corner of their pews, they pour their strains downward, as if the throne of the Deity was in the central parts of the earth—all manner of positions, but the right one, do they adopt.

“Good vocalists are to be found in the world. What position do they adopt when they wish to sing well? *They stand.* Exeter Hall is filled to overflowing, the very earth shakes with the powerful throbbing of majestic song. It is one of the old masters—an oratorio. Eight hundred performers are on the platform—Do they sit? No; they would abhor it. Among the highest productions of secular music is the Italian opera. The ablest singers here employ their utmost skill. As they pour forth their floods of melody and hold their glittering audiences entranced, do they sit? Man, are they mad? Nay, the humblest singer in the rudest concert in a provincial town, or rural village, would not, by such a posture, put in peril the small musical reputation he may have. You say, ‘What have concerts, operas, and such like things to do with praising God.’ Truly, much every way. There is an old Latin phrase worth remembering—‘*Fas est ab hoste doceri,*’ instruction may be got, even from an enemy. These men know what good music is; they have devoted their time and talents to it; they have given to it their lives; although they may have prostituted their talents to unworthy ends, yet are they masters of their art; and it is not unsound, but thoroughly orthodox, that even from the children of this world instruction may be gleaned by the children of light. Yes—we have something to do even with such worldly things as operas. We *have got to be ashamed before them;* heartily ashamed and confounded. Is it not outrageous, that while men spare no exertion, or expense, or sacrifice, while they employ all the resources of science to produce the grandest music, merely for the entertainment of mortals like themselves, or even, perchance, for worse purposes, that we should be *satisfied in providing* music for God’s worship, which, in many

cases, for defective performance, outrageous stupidity, and savage discord, could only be equalled by a chorus of the worst street singers; and not only so, but that this very defective performance and savage discord should be lauded as something meritorious and praiseworthy !!! It is horrible thus to glory in our shame. We must get rid of such heresies. Sacrifices, halt and maimed, we must no longer offer to the Lord God. Our Father demands the **BEST** of our powers, and, with His help, *the best we will give.*

"**III. THIS POSTURE IS CONDEMNED BY PROPERITY.** Paul says solemnly, 'Let all things be done decently.' Is this decent, to sit and praise God ? It has the appearance of disgusting laziness—it is irreverent. Why, if it were done in any similar case, you would be scouted as barbarians. Royalty visits your town, or it may be the royal representative. It is becoming to present to the august visitant an address expressive of loyalty and affection. You meet—go in a body—present it—in what posture ? You STAND ; and if you did not stand—if, when you entered the royal presence, you called for chairs and forms and sat down—you would be regarded as a mob of untutored savages. And this is always done the wide world over, where inferiors come into the presence of superiors, to speak their praise (where they do not prostrate themselves or kneel), they stand ; and yet what you would be ashamed to do to a mortal, you hesitate not to do to the Lord God Almighty—you treat Him, in speaking His praise, as you wouldn't treat your landlord, your minister, a magistrate, your brother. That posture of lazy effeminacy and indifference, which all men cry down in the presence even of an earthly king, you think good enough for Him who wears 'on His vesture and His thigh, a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.' For the sake of a mere prejudice, which has on its behalf neither religion nor reason, inspiration nor common sense, you continue a posture which outrages propriety, art, graceful execution, and the Word of God.

"Now, men and brethren ! let us have no more of this. We are not boys, we are grown men. We can exercise our understandings. We have the moral courage to abandon bad habits. Let us not be like our fathers, stiff-necked and rebellious on this point. Many of our congregations have abandoned the sitting posture, and now stand at praise. Let the reformation go on till this disgrace is thoroughly wiped away from the Presbyterian Church.

"ISAIAH N. HARKNESS."

*2. Standing is in these countries as it was in "the lands of the Bible," the posture of respect and reverence; and is, therefore, the proper attitude to be observed in singing praise—THE WORSHIP OF GOD.*

We rise at the approach of a superior, we stand uncovered in the presence of the great—the noble. Praise is an act of worship—prayer is an act of worship—swearing is an act of worship. In all these, we approach the throne of Jehovah, we go into the presence of the mighty God, the holy and the true—the King of kings, and Lord of lords ; consistency with our common civil customs demands of us, that, in doing so, we shall assume the posture of reverence. In prayer, and in taking an oath, our attitude is respectful ; but in praise, indolence or prejudice prevents. This point will turn up afterwards, therefore it is not enlarged on here.

*3. There are ADVANTAGES resulting from the attitude thus sanctioned by reason and reverence, which are not to be despised. It is the attitude of activity, and tends to rouse a congregation more*

*generally to join in the service of song*; and this too will contribute materially to its better execution.

When we have nothing to do, we generally sit if convenient; so that sitting and inactivity have come to be associated. When we rise, it is usually for some active operation, so that standing and active employment are likewise associated. We sit down to rest, we rise to work. Are there not many, who, sitting during the service of praise, scarcely ever think of opening their lips, and these same persons when standing at this part of Divine worship, do invariably sing? They rise, and their impression is that they have risen, as is usual, *to do something*—that is it? to worship God in sacred song; and, as matter of course, they fall in with their fellow-worshippers in their holy hymn. And this, I am persuaded, is one of the reasons why, in the standing position, the singing is better performed; because thus “*ALL* ~~the~~ *sing* *praise the Lord*.” For has it not been the influence of congregational psalmody ~~to~~ altogether from the scientific perfection of musical performance, but also to no inconsiderable extent, from the manifest unanimity ~~in~~ heartedness with which the entire company in the exercise? Though sharps and flats are all ignored, though crotchets and quavers, and *vice versa*, we cannot but sympathise with this harmony of glorious, animating song. The people are Hermon’s dew hath fallen and moistened

many an arid heart, and ours, though dry, “very dry,” hath not escaped its soothing, softening influence. What more refreshing, exhilarating scene could we desire to witness, than a large congregation, all—old men and matrons, young men and maidens, and children with their sweet and tiny tones—all heartily joining in the hymn of praise to Jacob’s mighty God—

“To Him who loved the souls of men,  
And washed them in His blood,  
To royal honours raised their heads,  
And made them priests to God.”

Yes, O yes, through the multitude that throngs the sanctuary on the Sabbath, or the greater multitudes that now and again assemble outside, under the clear blue sky—

“When to Him *every* tongue is praise,  
*And every* heart is love;”  
These high hosannas make our earth  
Akin to Heaven above.

Thus it is that, assuming the standing posture furnishes an incentive to sing in Divine worship, the mere act of rising making the impression that we have risen for some active employment; and singing being the business on hand, the probability, nay, almost the certainty is, that we will join in the service, even though we do not “make conscience of the duty;” and the more general the performance throughout the whole congregation, the greater will be the incentive for every one to take part in it, for *its* influence will be the greater, and the pleasure

and profit thence accruing will be increased. While it is deeply to be lamented that any “dwellers in Zion” should not consider the service of song to be their bounden duty, and feel it to be their high religious privilege and pleasure—it is not to be discountenanced or despised, that they sing merely from habit, or as a musical performance; for not only are they thus in the way of material duty, but they are *vocally* honouring God, they are adding to the social effect of public worship, and contributing to the growth in grace of God’s real children. There is, besides, a greater probability that they who, in the meantime, praise God with the *voice*, will ultimately have their *hearts* attuned to heaven’s melody by the Holy Spirit. If then the exchange of the sitting for the standing posture in the duty of praise, would thus tend to multiply the number of singers, to convert the whole congregation into one mighty choir, and thereby to improve the psalmody, to promote the honour of Jehovah, and the spiritual progress of our fellow-worshippers—surely a member of the Church must have satisfactory, even Scriptural reasons for declining, and especially for opposing the change. Should there even be a faint likelihood of success, he cannot grudge the sacrifice.

*It is a matter of fact, that those religious communities which sing the Divine praise in this attitude, and which have not culpably allowed the instrumental to displace the vocal music, do more generally engage*

*in the service, and perform it with greater vigour and spirit.* This is stated as a fact, which any parties attending to such things must have noticed. One principal cause of success with the Methodists, and certainly not the least of the attractions to their places of worship, is, their enlivening, spirited psalmody. Some congregations stand only at the last psalm, others stand only at the evening service. In such cases the superiority of the singing performed in the standing posture, and the fact that a far greater number take part in it, are manifest to all. Mr. Barry, one of the musicians already quoted, states upon this point, "In my experience, I have invariably found that those congregations that stand when singing, contain a *greater number of singers*, and that they *sing better* than those that sit."

*By assuming the standing posture, and by the more general, and vigorous, and spirited psalmody to which the attitude contributes, worshippers are*

BETTER QUALIFIED FOR THE OTHER SERVICES OF  
THE SANCTUARY.

How necessary the preparation of the Sabbath for the proper improvement of its privileges ! that the body be not broken down with fatigue, that the mind be as free as may be from distracting cares. The private and the domestic devotional exercises, in the morning of the Sabbath, tend to prepare for those of the sanctuary ; and those of the public sanctuary, devoutly engaged in, will prepare for those of the

closet, and of "the church in the house." One religious service properly, heartily performed, prepares us for another—qualifies for the better discharge of all the other public duties, and for the better enjoyment of all the other privileges of the house of God. Public speakers become enamoured with the doctrines they teach, the sentiments they promulgate. Singers, also, have the thoughts and feelings of their usual songs interwoven with the very texture of their souls. Hence the ballads of a country, and the sacred songs composed for a people and sung by them, have ever been among the most powerful instrumentalities for indoctrinating the popular mind, and for rousing the masses to civil or religious revolutions. The very exercise of frequently singing a psalm, tends to enlist our sympathies in favour of the ideas and feelings expressed in it. The cordial, intelligent, spirited singing of an appropriate sacred hymn by a whole congregation, has, perhaps, a stronger tendency than any other religious exercise to elevate the heart heavenward, to fill the soul with holy feeling, and so to prepare us to discharge the duty and to appreciate the precious privilege of PRAYER. Only grant what no attentive observer will deny, that, in the standing posture, a congregation will more generally join in the psalmody, and that the duty will be better discharged—it follows that more will be qualified, that all will be better qualified, for the duty of prayer by standing at praise. I question

not the revealed doctrine, that “without the Spirit of Christ we can do nothing” acceptable in this or in any other sacred service; yet I hold as also Scriptural, that the Spirit of God is a reasonable spirit—a spirit of wisdom, and that He operates by reasonable and suitable means. Standing, we have seen, is the posture best suited to efficient singing; the cordial singing of an appropriate sacred song is a most suitable means for conforming the minstrel’s mind and spirit “to the image of the Son” of God developed in that song; this oneness of heart between the Saviour and the singer, this “having the same mind that is in Christ,” is the very spirit of the successful suppliant—“*the spirit of grace and supplication.*” The posture for praise advocated in these pages, therefore, is one among the reasonable and suitable means which we may expect the spirit of wisdom to bless in promoting our preparation for prayer.

As to the other services of the sanctuary,

#### THE PREACHING AND THE HEARING OF THE WORD,

We have ample reason for coming to the same conclusion. Every preacher who has, to the most limited extent, “an ear for music,” if he can but distinguish between the shriek of a saw sharpening, and the enrapturing tones of “the Swedish nightingale,” is aware that there is no earthly means so powerful in disqualifying him for the efficient and pleasant discharge of his Sabbath services—in vexing *his spirit* and distracting *his mind*—in dragging

down his heart to the very dust, as the miserable, croaking, monotonous noise made in some congregations, under the *name of singing*, and instead of the moving melody, the sweet service of song. A minister lately informed me, that the only really miserable Sabbath which he remembers to have experienced during the whole course of his ministry, occurred some fifteen years ago. It was a communion Sabbath, and all his unhappiness and non-communion with Christ and Christians, that day, arose, as he believes, from the absence of the precentor, and from the wretched, heavy, heartless droning of his substitute. He came to the house of God that morning with the ordinary amount of feeling and preparation, but there was no hand to sweep skilfully the lyre of David, and "the evil spirit," ever on the watch, and especially on such important occasions, embraced the opportunity, entered, and tormented for the time, almost unmolested. But, on the other hand, how frequently does the preacher ascend the pulpit dull and dry, and utterly out of tune; when the morning psalms, pitched on the proper key, and sung with spirit by the precentor and "the people all," and well-sustained throughout, wind up his spirits, regulate his voice, soothe and harmonize his feelings, in some degree to accord with the high themes upon which he would fix attention. A preacher's performance is regulated, to a far greater extent than is generally supposed, by the musical performance of the precentor and the people. The

psalm of the morning is the key-note to the sermon of the day. From some districts of his congregation a minister returns home, after a day's visiting, all dispirited and heartless. He has met with the spirit neither of prayer nor of praise ; he is greatly cast down. There is one circumstance which would afford relief in this case. Let there be a family among the last with whom he calls in the evening—a family of young persons, who will join cheerfully, and heartily in singing the psalm of praise ; his jaded soul is revived, he loves to linger with these joyous spirits, and when he can stay in this happy, psalm-singing circle no longer, he leaves that *home* with many a cordial blessing upon its inmates—he leaves, not as he came, but in hope and gladness of heart ; and, as he wends his weary way to the manse, he chidingly chants to himself—

“Then why wast thou cast down, my soul,  
Why in me so dismayed ?  
Trust God : for I shall praise Him yet,  
His count'nce is mine aid.”

With respect to “THE HEARING OF THE WORD,” I think it only requisite to remark, that if, as has been already argued, a congregation, by adopting the standing posture in praise, can sing with more heart and spirit, if they join in the service more generally, and if they are thus prepared to pray with greater fervency “in the spirit,” they must necessarily be better qualified for “hearing what God the Lord will speak ;” for their attention is quickened, their

feelings are elevated, and their whole soul is brought more into unison with the mind of God, developed in the earnest preaching of "the glorious Gospel."

There are many HINDRANCES TO PROFITABLE HEARING AND PREACHING. Of these, "*sleeping in church*" is one of the most formidable. When parties who have to travel a considerable distance, and who are fatigued perhaps, by the out-door labours of the week, come into a house of worship thronged with people, and badly ventilated, as our churches generally are, and sit down motionless for half an hour, who has not observed, perhaps felt, how soon and mercilessly they are assaulted with *drowsiness*? Some, ashamed of their infirmity, and grieved for their sin, induced as they know it is, by over-exertion, or by over-indulgence, struggle courageously and foil their foe, yielding on no occasion but in the last extremity, when quite over-powered. But others *set* themselves for a nap—systematically and sometimes audibly indulge in it, and manifestly *enjoy it richly*. This latter is a case of incorrigible *voluntaryism*, and deserves to be sharply dealt with, if, indeed, there be any hope for it. For the former, of whom there is hope, it suits my present purpose to recommend but one remedial measure, and that is, a *frequent change of position*; to stand, not only in acts of direct devotion, but also for a moment or two occasionally during the sermon, whenever the soft paralysing approaches of the foe are felt. To hear profitably, and at the

same time to sleep, or to struggle against sleep and the apprehended sin and shame of sleeping in the sanctuary, when the overtures of Heaven are being made, is an impossibility. If, then, we are to profit by the preaching of the Gospel, we must get rid of this lethargic state, and have the bodily senses and mental faculties wide awake; and if those who are afflicted with drowsiness rise to their feet and engage heartily and energetically in singing the psalm immediately before the sermon, I am persuaded that, unless it be unusually long and somniferous, they will thus succeed in baffling sleep till its close. The physical exertion, the change of position, and the sympathy which the body will have with the roused, excited feelings, will tend to quicken the whole man, and to qualify him better for hearing, "as the oracles of God ought to be heard."

Thus far have I argued the question, irrespective of Bible authority; and I think we have found reason to conclude, that standing is the proper posture for praise, because, that,

1. In this posture the service can be better performed.
2. It is the posture of respect and reverence.
3. Because of the *advantages* which result from it, and from the more vigorous and spirited psalmody to which it contributes.

Now, although the Bible were altogether silent on the subject, we hold these reasons and advantages, *nay, any* one of them, to be quite sufficient to

justify a church in assuming the posture, all-sufficient to persuade those to adopt it *who are able* to do so, who are anxious to *do every service to God in the best possible manner, and who will conscientiously and without prejudice consider the question.* Of course, if we be mistaken in *all* the reasons assigned and advantages mentioned, if the arguments adduced be *all* without foundation, the structure must fall; but until *every one* of these be shown to be purely imaginary, our position remains firm and sure.

I might now conclude, but I know that "the many" will yet put the question, "WHAT SAITH THE LORD?" In this "the many" are right; for "to the law and the testimony" the genuine Protestant will ever come for the settlement of all religious questions. To the proper inquiry of the multitude, then, we reply—the Lord hath spoken, HIS BIBLE IS NOT SILENT UPON THE SUBJECT DISCUSSED. The Bible would have all to sing, and to *sing with all their energies.* It calls upon all to do so, and tells of a time—a time of revival and refreshing from the presence of the Lord, when the call will be responded to, when all the kingdoms of the earth, and all the isles of the ocean will wait on God's law, when the invitation—the command—

"All people who on earth do dwell,  
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice,  
Him serve with mirth, His praise forth tell,  
Come ye before Him and rejoice."

will be acknowledged and obeyed by all, from the least to the greatest. How the silent, and slumbering, and indolent, who had previously reclined at their ease in Zion, will, on that day of universal jubilee, have their dreams disturbed, their sleep broken in upon, their lips unsealed ; and their spirit, "made willing"—touched and quickened by fire from on high, will etherealize and raise their "weak" and weighty "flesh," and with their "bodies," as well as their spirits, they will at last give glory to God in the service of song.

Before proceeding with the Bible testimony as to posture in praise, I submit the following statements :—

1. If the Divine Word do not expressly and directly forbid, or otherwise discountenance it, and if the arguments adduced be not *every one* invalid, it follows, that the adoption of the erect posture, being the most reasonable and efficient one in singing God's praise, is much to be desired.

2. If the Divine Word leave the posture of praise among those things which are *indifferent*—if its instructions be confined to the *spirit of praise* alone—still we maintain that, unless *all* our arguments for "standing" can be proved to be utterly groundless, the assumption of that posture by a congregation during their song of praise, would be both comely and profitable to all concerned.

3. If the Bible is resolutely and perseveringly silent on the subject of *sitting at the service of sacred*

*song*—if there is neither instruction, nor precept, nor example, throughout the whole Word of God—if there is neither canon nor practice of the ancient Jewish Church, nor of the primitive Christian Church, that sanctions, in the slightest degree, SITTING in the public sanctuary when addressing the High and Holy One in the service of praise, it certainly would be difficult to prove that this posture of indolence is the *only right one*. Yet this is *practically held* by many, and most obstinately by some, notwithstanding the fact, patent to all, that God's Word does not, even in one solitary instance, mention, much less sanction it, and that the Church, by Divine direction, never practised it; and with the arguments already stated before the mind, it will be no easy matter to prove that it is *a proper posture at all*.

4. If the Bible mentions the *manner* as well as the matter—the *posture*, as well as the spirit of praise—and if, by precept, or by the invariable practice of the Church, it sanctions the standing attitude, the question is then presented—How far is that divinely-sanctioned practice of the Jewish Church, not being of a ceremonial nature, binding upon us?

5. If the Old Testament enjoins the standing posture, and if the Old Testament Church invariably adhered to it in singing their songs of praise, and if Christ and His apostles, and the New Testament Church for centuries, followed their example, unless the attitude be a ceremonial observance, no

longer to be maintained, or a practice to be modified or abrogated in consequence of some present prevailing custom, is it not presented to us with all the Divine sanction it could have, in the absence of a direct and express New Testament command, and has it not all the Scriptural authority requisite to its observance as a DUTY, and is it not attended with such manifest advantages as should be sufficient to induce us to adopt it as a PRIVILEGE ?

This last I believe to be the aspect in which the subject is presented to us in the Bible record, and in the history of the Church.

STANDING IS THE ONLY POSTURE OF PUBLIC PRAISE  
RECOGNISED IN THE WORD OF GOD.

II. THE BIBLE ARGUMENT.

1. *The Jewish Church stood in the service of praise.* To the performance of this all-important part of public worship, as we have already noticed, four thousand of the Levites were appointed by David. They were divided into small companies, each attending at the temple, usually for a week at a time. On ordinary days, the service was performed twice, *i.e.*, at the morning and evening sacrifices ; on extraordinary occasions, it was more frequent. “ While performing, *they stood* along in a row across the east end of the court of the priests.” “ Here there were *no seats* provided, it being considered unlawful, irreverent, to sit either in this

court, or in the court of Israel around it. Regard for the holiness of these places, and reverence for God, required to be continually manifested by *standing on the feet.*<sup>1</sup> “The office of the Levites was, . . to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at even.”—1 Chron. xxiii. 28, 30. “The Levites, which were the singers, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them one hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets, . . to make one sound . . in praising and thanking the Lord, . . and when they lifted up their voice, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for His mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with the glory of the Lord.”—2 Chron. v. 12, 13. “Jehoshaphat and all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children; and the Levites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high.”—2 Chron. xx. 4, 13, 19. “Ye that stand in the house of the Lord sing praise unto His name.”

—Ps. cxxxv.

From this sample of the passages which might be quoted, it appears that standing at praise was the practice of the Jewish Church; it was their INVARIABLE *practice in public worship.* This posture, they assumed, not through caprice, neither because they found by experience that they could thus more efficiently discharge their duty, as a musical performance, but by the express direction of God.

<sup>1</sup> Nevins.

How very particular the Divine specifications for the structure of the tabernacle and the temple, and how numerous and minute the laws regulating their services! Hence the phrases so frequently occurring "as God commanded Moses," and "as the Lord commanded," "by His prophets." It is not with Moses as a leader, or with David as a king, we have to do here, but with both as God's inspired prophets. The worship they established was by Divine, not civil authority. Moses failed in one case to observe fully the command with which the Divine glory was intimately associated, and he fell in the wilderness. Aaron, too, erred, and was debarred from the land of promise. Why was "the breach upon Uzzah," and why the sad fate of Nadab and Abihu, but for ignorance of, or inattention to, the Divine command. David, then, knowing the jealousy of Jehovah, and the danger of provoking it, must have made sure of God's authority for all that he did—for the alterations and additions that he made in His public worship. "The Spirit of the Lord spake by him"—(2 Sam. xxiii. 2)—and especially when he gave directions about sacred things. Of one of his chief vocalists it is said, that "he was the king's *seer* in the matters of God."—1 Chron. xxv. 5. The service of song being all important, we would expect Divine authority to regulate the whole thing—its agents and instruments, its matter and manner, down to its very *minutiae*. The Levites accordingly were chosen by

God. The musical instruments are called “the instruments of God”—1 Chron. xvi. 42. The sacred songs were inspired by God, the times for performing them were prescribed by God, and not only “the office of the Levites . . . to stand morning and evening to praise in the house of the Lord,” but “their orderings in their service, . . . according to their manner,” were all “as the Lord God of Israel had commanded”—(1 Chron. xxiv. 19)—and when committing “the pattern of the temple” to Solomon, and directions for all the work of *the service of the house of the Lord*, he declares “that he had all this by the Spirit, and that the Lord made him to understand all this in writing, by His hand upon him.”—1 Chron. xxviii. 13, 19. To Israel assembled in their holy city, and bowing in lowly homage before the Lord, covered with sackcloth and ashes, each in sorrow and humiliation confessing his own sin, the command is issued by the Levites—(Neh. ix.)—

“STAND UP AND BLESS THE LORD.”

The term “to bless,” when God is its object, signifies “to ascribe blessing or glory to,” “to sing the praises of,” “to praise,” whether in poetry or prose, in speaking or in singing. The beautiful address to God that follows is in *form* a prose composition, furnished perhaps by Nehemiah to the Levites for directing the devotions of the people on the occasion. Though to a large extent historical,

it is deeply penitential, and contains the lowliest confessions of sin, and the highest ascriptions of glory—in short, all the elements of praise and of direct worship, more extensively than many of the psalms.

The command is of *Divine authority*; for the Levites who issued it were appointed by God, and instructed by inspired prophets to conduct and direct the worship of the people. The duty enjoined is evidently Divine, and the time and circumstances appropriate for its performance.

But, does the precept *enjoin the standing posture in praise*? Perhaps not necessarily; for the term rendered “*stand up*” is occasionally employed as a term of excitement or preparation, like the Latin word *agite*. However, considering the nature of the service to which the people are called—an act of direct worship—the ascription of blessing and glory to God—and considering the posture usually observed by them in this devotional exercise, I think it accords better with these circumstances to understand the term, not as incidental to the precept “*bless the Lord*,” but as involving in itself an injunction to “*stand*”—to rise up from their prostrate position, and to assume the attitude of active and reverential service. If any be disposed to object that the address which follows this command is prayer rather than praise, and, therefore, can have nothing to do with the subject of psalmody, I answer, that many of the psalms are prayer

throughout—that praise may be in prose as well as in poetry—may be *spoken* as well as *sung*—the chief difference being, that singing praise to God is the higher style of worship—the more powerful and pleasing mode of expression. So that if the people were required to stand when *speaking praise*, & *fortiore*, they should stand when *singing praise*.

Again, in 2 Chron. xxix. 25-27, we are informed that Hezekiah “set the Levites,” literally, “*caused them to stand* in the house of the Lord, . . . according to the commandment of David, and of Gad, the seer, and of Nathan, the prophet, for

SO WAS THE COMMANDMENT OF THE LORD BY HIS  
PROPHETS.

And the Levites *stood*, and when the burnt-offering began, the song of the Lord began also.” Here, the Divine command applies to the whole service with all its recorded particulars, and, among these, to “Hezekiah’s causing the Levites to stand in the house of the Lord, and their standing to sing the song of the Lord when the burnt-offering began.” Here, then, is a clear instance of the standing posture in public psalmody, *and this by the command of God*. On this passage, one of our most acute and accomplished Biblical critics<sup>1</sup> observes, “In 2 Chron. xxix. 25, 26, I think the standing attitude of the Levites is unquestionable, and I

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Robert Wilson, Professor of Biblical Criticism in the Presbyterian College, Belfast.

believe it to be also *divinely* enjoined. The same verb is used in the original of both verses. In the 25th, where it is said the king ‘set the Levites,’ the literal rendering is, ‘*he caused them to stand*,’ and this was done by the commandment of the Lord through His prophets. Then, in the 26th, the repetition of the verb in *kal*, removes any ambiguity which the use of it in *hiphil* may have involved, and presents the Levites clearly in a standing posture. Under this view, as I have already intimated, the command of God necessarily covers, not only the attitude of the Levites, but the entire celebration.” Let it not be forgotten, then, that God expressly enjoined standing as the posture for praise to the Jewish Church.

2. *Christ and His apostles stood at praise.* Christ and His apostles were Jews. He considered it incumbent on Him as our surety and example, to “*fulfil all righteousness*,” to observe all Church ordinances, both as to *manner* and matter, especially when sanctioned by God. Being Jews, they would, of course, devoutly and regularly observe all the ordinances of Jewish worship, and likewise follow the Jewish customs, as to the *manner* of their worship in both synagogue and temple. They did so as to the kneeling posture in prayer, Luke xxii. 41; Acts ix. 40, and xx. 36; as to the sitting posture in teaching, Luke iv. 20; John viii. 2; Acts xvi. 13; as to the standing posture in *reading* the Divine Word, Luke iv. 16; and may we

not presume, with all the certainty short of that which is produced by an express declaration, that *they did so likewise as to the standing posture in praise?* Was the posture a matter of indifference? Then why should they be singular? Was it by Divine command? Then, doubtless, they would obey; they would join with their fellow-worshippers in their divinely-prescribed ordinances, at one of which (the feast of tabernacles), it was usual not only to stand, but to walk joyously, waving the willow and palm branch aloft in the air, and to sing their loud hosannas to the God of Israel.

The disciples and the enthusiastic multitude that accompanied Jesus from Bethany to Jerusalem, on one occasion, as they descended the Mount of Olives, moving on in high hope and triumph to the holy city, "rejoiced and praised God for all the mighty works which they had seen" proclaiming harmoniously as they *passed along*—

"Hosanna!

Blessed is the king of Israel,  
That cometh in the name of the Lord:  
Blessed be the kingdom of our father David,  
That cometh in the name of the Lord:

Hosanna in the highest!"—**MARK xi.**

Jesus and His apostles stood when singing the hymn after the passover, on the night of his betrayal.

(1.) This is evident from the fact already stated, that they were devout Jews, and as such they would observe all prescribed and divinely-sanctioned Jewish practices.

(2.) It is evident from the posture occupied at the passover table. Standing was the attitude originally enjoined and observed at this feast, Exodus xii. 11. The erect was changed to the *reclining posture*; but when or why the change was made, we have no Bible information. The common table posture was probably enjoined as a symbol of the *liberty* and *rest* enjoyed by Israel in the promised land, and to which dignity and repose, before their arrival there, they were but *travelling*. That the reclining or "table posture" was the one observed by Christ and His family, at their last passover entertainment, is evident from the statement, "there was leaning on Jesus' bosom that disciple whom He loved." This was practicable only on the supposition that they were reclining on couches in the eastern style. The same is manifest from the original terms employed to denote their posture on the occasion. These are the variations of *πιπτω*, "to fall," and *κείμαι*, "to lie down;" whereas, "to sit" on a seat, on the ground, or on horseback, is expressed by terms taken from *καθίζομαι* "to sit." To sing, as God requires His praise to be sung, in this table posture is impossible. Jesus, therefore, when engaged in the performance of this solemn act of Divine worship, *stood*, according to duty and custom, for "*He did all things well.*"

(3.) It is further evident from the Gospel narrative. By Matthew and Mark it runs thus—"And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of

*Olives.*" John adds the direction contained in none of the other Gospels—"Arise, let us go hence." I have neither seen nor heard it questioned, that the language of these sacred writers just quoted, refers to the one event—the departure from the guest-chamber. The question then, is, what position in the narrative is John's statement to occupy? Is it to precede the statement of Matthew and Mark, or to be placed between the two clauses of their statement? for it could not follow it. In the most approved "Harmonies of the Gospels," the passages are thus ordered—"Arise, let us go hence; and when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives." If this arrangement be admitted, it will go far to determine the point, that Jesus and His apostles, on the occasion referred to, stood when singing the Divine praise. It will also allow the two statements—"having sung a hymn, they went to the Mount of Olives"—which Matthew and Mark have connected, to remain connected; and the singing and the departure to remain as they have represented them, immediate antecedent and consequent; and by thus placing Christ's proposal to "rise and be going," before the "hymning," the whole procedure will be in full accordance with the established practice of the Jewish Church; and the statements and events which Matthew and Mark have united, will not be torn asunder by either word or deed; whereas, by placing John's clause, "Arise, let us go hence," between the "hymning" and the

"departure," thus—"and having sung a hymn," Jesus said unto them "Arise, let us go hence," and "they went out to the Mount of Olives"—an *immediate* compliance with the direction—"Arise, let us go hence," would certainly be secured; but it would be at the expense of severing two statements which two evangelists, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, connected together, and two events, which, by the same infallible authority, they represented as *immediate* antecedent and consequent.

I am aware of but one objection to the proposed arrangement of the passages under consideration, *i.e.*, the delay which the singing would cause between the actual departure from the guest-chamber and the urgent command, "let us go hence." The delay thus occasioned would be trifling, compared with that proposed by some interpreters, who maintain that chapters xv., xvi., and xvii. of John, were delivered in the guest-chamber, and that not till their close—as seems to be intimated in John xviii. 1—did "they go forth," in accordance with the proposal, "let us go hence," in chapter xiv. Even this lengthened delay, had it occurred, which I do not believe, would be of easy interpretation. After Christ's words to Judas—"Thou art the man who shall betray me;" "What thou doest, do quickly;" and, after the traitor's sullen and hurried departure, seeing Jesus bent upon the crisis, and hearing the words of determination and courage—"Arise, let us go," not concealing ourselves here in apparent

cowardice—let us go, and boldly meet the enemy; how reasonable to suppose that the loving disciples, on witnessing all this, were reluctant that He should go and expose Himself to danger, and that a fresh burst of sorrow interrupted Jesus as He was about to leave, and thrilling through His heart of sympathy, set Him once more to comfort and instruct His weak and weeping children, and to plead earnestly with God for them! In this there would be nothing unnatural; but, considering the character of Christ, and the deep sorrow of His disciples, quite the reverse. However, as before remarked, I think the expression—"they went forth," in John xviii. 1, does not refer to the departure out of the guest-chamber, and that the discourse and prayer—(John xv.-xvii)—were not uttered in the guest-chamber, but "in the vale of the soft-flowing Kedron," near to some exuberant vineyard, whose broad leaves and purple clusters Jesus and His disciples, when "they resorted thither," were wont to see gleaming in the pale moonlight, and vividly suggesting the fitting figure with which chapter xv. commences, "I am the *vine*, ye are the branches;" and that in this, or some such scene, and not in the guest-chamber, the prayer contained in chapter xvii. was uttered, is manifest from the language introducing it—"Jesus *lifted up His eyes to heaven*"—a gesture appropriate, and ascribed almost exclusively to a person praying in the *open air*. John xiv., I think, was delivered in the guest-chamber, likely after the exit of the

traitor; and the three following chapters after the company left, and before they crossed the Kedron; so that the delay in the chamber while singing, after Christ proposed to leave, would be very trifling. Besides, the words—"let us go hence," require merely that their departure should be as quick as possible, not that it should be *instantaneous*, if the service were not completed, or if any requisite preparation remained to be made. Upon the whole, then, I conclude that the order of the passages considered, which renders the Gospel narrative most reasonable and least liable to objection, to be the following:—"Arise, let us go hence; and having sung a hymn, they went out" (of the guest-chamber) "towards" (*εἰς*) "the Mount of Olives"—(they paused for instruction and prayer on the Mount Zion side of the Kedron) and "when Jesus had spoken these words—(John xv.-xvii.)—"he went forth with His disciples" (from their place of retirement, on the banks of the Kedron) "over the brook, and entered the garden" (of awful and mysterious agony).<sup>1</sup>

From this arrangement of Matthew xxvi. 30, Mark xiv. 26, and John xiv. 31, if admitted, it is

<sup>1</sup> Since writing the above, I have received from Dr. Robert Wilson, Professor of Biblical Criticism in the Assembly's College, Belfast, the following statement of his opinion respecting the chronological arrangement of the three clauses considered:—"After the words, 'Arise, let us go hence,' Christ and His disciples, I believe, engaged in the exercise indicated by *ὑμνοσαύτες*, and he addressed to them the discourse recorded in John, chapters xv., xvi., xvii.—after which 'He went with His disciples beyond the brook Kedron.'"

manifest ; and if not admitted, from the practice of the Jewish Church, it is equally manifest, that Jesus and His apostles stood when singing the concluding song of praise at their last passover.

3. *The Church in glory stand at praise.*

TESTIMONY OF THE APOCALYPSE TO THE STANDING  
POSTURE IN THE SERVICE OF SACRED SONG.

" What are these in bright array—  
This innumerable throng,  
Round the altar night and day,  
Hymning their triumphant song."

Rev. v.—When the Lamb took the book out of the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders—the Church redeemed—(v. 9)—fell down before the Lamb, in lowliest homage, and deepest adoration. But audible expression must be given to these grateful and devout feelings. This, however, they could not efficiently do, in their prostrate position, with either their voices or the harps which they held ; and, therefore, they *rose to perform the service*, as is evident from their again falling down in profoundest reverence—(v. 14)—after the myriad hosts of angels, and the whole creation had chimed in with their sublime and holy alleluia. With the redeemed the song began, and by the redeemed was the service closed. They performed a solemn act of worship, a lowly prostration before the throne of the Lamb, preparatory to their service of praise ; and, when the

service was concluded, in the same adoring posture, they uttered the final response, their acquiescing "Amen." Their falling down before the Lamb, at the *beginning* of the "new song," and their falling down to worship again at its *conclusion*—(v. 14)—demonstrate that during its performance *they stood*. Rev. vii. 9, &c.—The great multitude which John beheld, *stood* before the throne and before the Lamb, and with a loud voice proclaimed—"Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." "All the angels" likewise "stood round about the throne," and as the redeemed did in the former case, "they fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God," preparatory to taking their part in the vocal ascription of praise. Chapter xiv.—Again the apostle "looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion, and *with Him* (*stood*) an hundred forty and four thousand, and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and their voice was as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, and the tones of harpers harping with their harps were also heard;" and in chapter xv., "the victors appear *standing* on the sea of glass, having the harps of God, and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb."

Now, why has the Holy Spirit mentioned again and again the attitude of the redeemed Church when engaged in the act of praise? Was it fortuitously or by design? If the Bible is God's Word, every word of it is God's. There must, then, have been

some good end in view, in employing terms which represent *standing* as the invariable attitude of the celestial songsters. What was this end? Surely not that the Church on earth should *sit at psalmody*, nor that attitude in this department of worship is a matter of perfect indifference, but to inform us of the holy reverence, and the high and lively spirit—the glowing ardour with which the redeemed do praise their Redeemer-God; and that we should be IMITATORS of those, “who, through faith and patience, are now inheriting the promises,” and who are “*made perfect*.” “For we are come to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.”—Heb. xii. 23. Should we not consider our relationship to the heavenly Church? Should we not love its members more than saints on earth? Should we not be conformed to them as closely as possible? Should we not, as far as may be, maintain uniformity with this celestial choir, and so “perform our part” as to perfect the sublime universal harmony? Are not “the just *made perfect*” the best models for imitation? If uniformity with any portion of the Church be desirable and dutiful, it must be with those who are “sanctified and glorified,” the holiest, the best. Is not “all Scripture profitable for instruction?” Are not those portions of it informing us of the attitude of the Church on earth and in heaven, when singing Divine praise, profitable for our instruction? Infidelity alone could say they are not. If, then, they are

important and necessary, what lesson do they teach ? Certainly not that the Church is to sit in silence, nor to sit in song, for no language worse calculated to convey this instruction could possibly have been selected ; but, that the Church should universally sing the praises of God, and that the *standing attitude is the proper posture for praise*. I take for granted that the language employed by infinite wisdom is designed to teach some lesson, and one of importance ; and if that just now intimated be not the lesson, I am at a loss to know what it is. This much, at least, we must learn from the passages considered, that, towards the end of the first century, when the Apocalypse was written, *the Christian Church was accustomed invariably to stand in praising God* ; for the delineation of heaven's honours, and employments, and enjoyments, is usually taken from the honours, the employments, and enjoyments of the Church upon earth.

#### THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH STOOD WHEN WORSHIPPING GOD IN PRAISE.

##### III. THE HISTORICAL ARGUMENT.

THAT the Primitive Church practised sacred song largely, both in their public and private worship, we have, in heathen and Christian writers, abundant evidence. Our business at present is merely to introduce a few proofs that they performed this service, in what we have considered to be the reasonable and only Scriptural posture.

For a time after Christ's ascension to Heaven, we learn from Luke xxiv. 53, that "the disciples were continually in the temple praising and blessing God;" and, from Acts ii. 46, 47, that "they continued daily with one accord in the temple praising God." While they remained in Jerusalem, they attended public worship in the temple daily, at nine o'clock in the morning, and at three o'clock in the evening. "The days of their mourning were ended." They rejoiced that Messiah had come, had died, had risen and ascended; and to this their joy they gave full hearty expression, in their songs of triumphant praise to the God of grace. *They stood while doing so*; for in the temple, as we have seen, by the Divine command all were accustomed to stand at praise. The following testimonies refer chiefly to the period preceding the fifth century. Basil, about the middle of the fourth century, says of the worshipping assembly, "having *risen* from prayer, they betook themselves to psalmody."<sup>1</sup>

Augustine testifies that "psalmody being a principal part of Divine worship, the whole congregation performed it *standing in the church*";<sup>2</sup> and again, that "those only were *allowed to sit*, who were exhausted by labours and fasting, and those who had some infirmity in their feet, or other bodily weakness, which rendered them unable to stand."<sup>3</sup>

Jerome says, "After the psalms are sung, and the

<sup>1</sup> αναστατίσσοντες την χαλμαδιαγ.      <sup>2</sup> Ser. iii., Stans in ecclesia.

<sup>3</sup> Hom., tom. I., p. 174.

prayers finished, they all *sit down*, and the father preaches to them.”<sup>1</sup>

Chrysostom, in his thirty-ninth homily, has these words—“*Let us stand erect with becoming reverence*, and so present that most holy hymn ;”<sup>2</sup> in the fourteenth, “consider with whom *you stand*<sup>3</sup> in singing the sacred hymns at the communion, even with cherubim and seraphim ;” and again, in the twenty-fourth homily, “know ye not that you there *stand*<sup>3</sup> with angels, and sing with them,” referring to the cherubic hymn—“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts,” &c., which formed part of the eucharistic service.

In Cassian, b. ii., c. 8, we find the statement, “the whole congregation *standing*, sing together with a loud voice,”<sup>4</sup> “glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost ;” in c. 22, he adds, “all sit in silence, with the exception of those who *rise to sing* ;” and again, in c. 12, that the singers alone stood in the Egyptian monasteries ; the rest sat and listened in silence, in consideration of their vigils and hard labour. This refers, I presume, to a period subsequent to the Council of Laodicea, early in the fourth century, when the Psalmistæ were instituted, and the people forbidden to sing, at least until they should learn to keep time.

Bingham, b. xiii., c. 5, 8, 9, informs us, that, “on the Sabbath, and during the fifty days of pentecost,

<sup>1</sup> Eph. xvii. 5. Cunctis residentibus.

<sup>2</sup> ορθοὶ στῶματι καλωσ.

<sup>3</sup> εστηκασ.

<sup>4</sup> Omnes adstantes concinant cum clamore.

*all stood* in their devotions except the penitents, who were under Church discipline, and upon whom kneeling and prostration were enjoined as a token of humiliation and sorrow;" that, "on special days of fast and devotion, they sung very many hymns, after each they might meditate, and *fall down* to their private prayers ;" and that "*sitting was not a posture of devotion.*"

"Of this ancient custom," says a writer in the eighth number of the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, "an interesting relic has lately been discovered. It is a large sarcophagus, which learned investigators refer to the middle of the second century. On it is represented a Christian family in the act of worship—a young female is playing on a lyre to represent *singing*, and, to her right, are men *standing*, with apparent rolls of music in their hands, from which they are singing. This interesting monument indicates the existence, at that early period, of a collection of sacred music, the use of psalmody in devotional exercises," and that the service was performed in the standing posture.

Such, then, is the testimony of the Bible, and of ecclesiastical antiquity, on the *posture* of praise. The amount of it is, that the Jewish Church stood, the Apostolic Church stood, the Primitive Christian Church stood, and the Church in glory also, as presented in vision to the apostle, stood around the throne when hymning their high praises to God and to the Lamb ; that they assumed this posture by the

Divine command, and that the Church continued to praise God in the service of song, and to do so in the prescribed posture, until spiritual death and ecclesiastical tyranny interfered. Besides, it has been argued, that this command, not being of a ceremonial or temporary nature, but resting upon reasons which still exist in the construction of the organs of song, and the posture which it enjoins, continuing to be one of respect and reverence, is still authoritative and binding upon all who would perform the service of praise with power, and in accordance with the Divine prescription.

TWO QUESTIONS SUGGESTED BY THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE CONSIDERED—WHY THE PEOPLE GENERALLY CEASED TO SING AND TO STAND DURING THE SERVICE OF PRAISE? AND WHY, AT THE REFORMATION, ALONG WITH THE SERVICE, THEY DID NOT GENERALLY RESUME THE POSTURE OF PRAISE?

The evidence being thus clear, that for ages before and after the advent of Christ, the Church adored her God and Saviour in songs of praise, and performed that service in the standing posture, the question naturally presents itself—*How came Christian congregations to keep their seats, and so many of their members to be silent during this part of Divine worship?*

Of the various causes which seem sufficient to account for the introduction of this lamentable change, I can now refer only to a few.

1. The general decline of the Church in true spiritual life, and love, and zeal. In falling from her primitive purity and first love, prayer and praise would naturally languish. Unless where psalmody has become a mere musical exercise, dull, heartless singing is a sure index of a dead church ; and, according to the testimony of those who have written on revivals, the earliest symptom of returning life is the whole Church cordially and vigorously engaging in this most animating part of public worship.

2. In consequence of this decline in the Church's psalmody, in the number of singers, and in the spirit and efficiency of the service, "CANONICAL SINGERS" were appointed for its performance and improvement. Classes or schools were established for the cultivation of music, and for the instruction of the people ; of this privilege but few availed themselves, and the duty of conducting the public praise devolved, to a large extent, on these new functionaries. The intended remedy only increased the disease—for these trained psalmistæ soon began to introduce complicated and difficult "pieces," in which the people generally could not join, and which we may presume many would not try to learn ; so that the few who were still disposed to sing, could now do little more than join in the chorus or response. These choristers stood at an elevated desk, the congregation generally "*sat silent spectators,*" or rather *auditors.* The introduction of

instrumental music,<sup>1</sup> at a much later date, would, as employed, tend to remove the privilege still farther from the common people's reach, and to convert church psalmody, not necessarily perhaps, from being a sweet devotional privilege and exercise for all, into a musical entertainment for a few amateurs, as it now is in many continental cathedrals.

3. Psalmody became, to a great extent, a service of the *clergy*. The psalmistæ, or canonical singers became an order of the clergy, and were ordained to their office. Singing the Divine praise in the *holy place* thus became a “*sacred*” service, which the consecrated alone could perform, and in which the *profane* vulgar could have no part;<sup>2</sup> hence Cabassutius, a popish writer, denies that the body of the church took any part in the service, and calls *congregational* psalmody “a Protestant whim.”

4. The provincial Council of Laodicea, in the fourth century, prohibited the people under its jurisdiction from joining in the public psalmody of the church. Perhaps the occasion of this apparently unreasonable canon was, that the members of the church could not perform the service scientifically, and the regulation was probably designed to be temporary; but that other views soon began to prevail in high places became painfully manifest; for, in process of time, to complete the people's exclusion from the

<sup>1</sup> The organ was introduced to the Church about the middle of the eighth century. It was retained in the English Church in the time of Elizabeth, by “*the casting vote*.”

<sup>2</sup> See Note B., Appendix.

privilege and duty of public praise, to make absolutely sure that they might not only not sing with the voice, but that they might be debarred in the public service from praising, even “*with the understanding and the heart*,—

5. The ecclesiastical authorities decreed, that the psalms *must* be chanted IN LATIN,<sup>1</sup> a dead language to all but the learned! Of course, the people, ignorant of the service, and having nothing particular to do, SAT DOWN to admire in silence the chanting of the priests, the singing of the choir, and the booming of the organ.

But, at the Reformation, when there was a return to the principles of the Gospel, and to congregational psalmody, *why was there not also a return to the primitive and Scriptural posture of praise?* This, it must be granted, was very partial—the Church of England being the principal instance. The only explanation I can give of the circumstance is, that, upon some doctrines, the Reformers were short-sighted, and some important duties they quite overlooked; and that the Church, which comparatively paid so little attention to the heathen world, should not particularly notice and practise the prescribed posture of praise, is not to be wondered at. Besides, the Reformation was a great rebound from one extreme in a number of points, to the opposite extreme, in some other points. Because Romanism deifies the mother of Jesus, Protestantism is tempted

<sup>1</sup> See Note C., Appendix.

to think of her with scarcely adequate respect ; because Romanism worships " saints," the very name has become a term of derision ; because Rome has almost all prayers and no preaching. Protestantism, as developed in the Presbyterian Church, has almost nothing but preaching ; because Rome clothed her clergy with unlimited power, and claimed for them the lowliest reverence, Protestants frequently refuse that " respect" and " submission" which Jesus demands for His ambassadors ; because Romanists kneel at public prayer, Protestants stand ; and, because they stand at praise, Protestants sit. So that " it is a matter deserving serious consideration, how far the church puppetshows of Rome have unjustly driven some Protestant churches to the opposite extreme." " It is, indeed, an evil which Rome has entailed upon the whole Western Church, even upon those portions of it which have escaped her tyranny, that she has rendered suspicious much that, but for her, none could have thought otherwise than profitable and edifying. We have been compelled to act in the spirit of Hezekiah, when he said ' nehushtan,' to the very sign of salvation—the brazen serpent itself. We dutifully deny ourselves, perhaps, in some lawful and useful things; but there is a limit, unless we apprehend that we are not able to observe the requisite moderation and firmness, in keeping by the profitable, and in rejecting the superstitious." (F. T. Trench).

In meats and in drinks, &c., we may certainly deny

ourselves, but in doctrines taught, and duties enjoined, and practices of the Church sanctioned by God, we have no option. If the Bible enjoins or sanctions the standing attitude in praise, the Christian is bound to observe it, no matter how vile the party with whom he may homologate in so doing.

## CHAPTER V.

### OBJECTIONS TO THE STANDING POSTURE IN ZION'S SERVICE OF SONG CON- SIDERED.

#### O B J E C T I O N   F I R S T.

"He that is first in his own cause seemeth just, but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him."

*"The erect posture in praise is part of the Old Testament ceremonial, not enjoined in the New Testament, and, therefore, not to be observed by Christians."*

In replying to this—the principal objection to the position advocated in the preceding pages, I would solicit the attention of the sincere inquirer to the three following points:—1st. That many laws under the Mosaic economy are entirely abolished; 2d. Some New Testament laws are held to be adequately obeyed when the *spirit* of the precept is maintained, though the *letter* of it be disregarded; and, 3d. That many religious duties are attended to by Christians, which, with their appendages, are not expressly enjoined in the New Testament Scriptures.

The question here to be considered is—

IN WHICH OF THESE THREE CLASSES IS THE DIVINE INJUNCTION TO PRAISE THE LORD IN THE STANDING POSITION TO BE RANKED ?

1. I answer that we are not to place it in the *first class*, i.e., *among the abrogated laws of the Jewish code*. The laws regarding sacrifices, offerings, divorce, and food, and many others, were merely temporary and local, and were, therefore, abrogated. All types and shadows which found their substance and antitype in Christ, are necessarily no more. All that had exclusive regard to particular conditions of the Church, to particular periods or places, are no longer needful. They answered their end and passed away; but whatever reasons, apart from the Divine command, the Jewish Church had for standing when praising God, must have existed before even the Jewish Church was constituted, and do now exist for the Christian Church; nay, all reasons for observing that posture of reverence are surely enhanced to the Christian, in as much as his superior privileges demand of him a lowlier humility, a warmer gratitude. The following are among the tests or canons by which we may generally decide whether an Old Testament law be still binding upon us:—

(1.) *A command is authoritative as long as the reason of it remains.* Jesus was the end of the ceremonial law. In His atoning death the reasons for the law appointing animal sacrifices ceased; that

law is, therefore, no longer binding. The reasons for the Jewish Church to praise their God in the standing position still exist; for man's physical frame is the same, and Jehovah, the God of Christians, is Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and He is as great and as good, as holy, and worthy, and venerable, as under the Jewish dispensation; the law, therefore, enjoining that posture is still binding.

(2.) *Any Divine precept, or divinely-sanctioned ecclesiastical practice, founded upon the relations permanently subsisting between God and His rational creatures, is always binding.*

We are related to God as creatures to their Creator, as paupers to their benefactor, as captives to their generous deliverer, as the lost to their Saviour, as children to a parent. Out of these, our relations to God, grow the duties of reverence, gratitude, loyalty, adoration—and the duty of giving expression to these deep feelings of the soul, by the most suitable and effective means. Psalmody accordingly, by God's own appointment, is the chief means for this purpose, combining as it does *poetry*, the most powerful language—and *singing*, the most powerful mode of expression. From our relationship to God just mentioned, results the obligation of performing this psalmody in the most reverential and efficient posture; and this we learn from experience and observation, as well as from the Divine command and the practice of the ancient Church, is the stand-

ing attitude. The Divine law, therefore, which enjoined that attitude is not abrogated ; it is still binding.

(3.) *When a law or divinely-sanctioned practice is manifestly founded on the fitness subsisting between the service appointed and the performers of it, such law is as permanent as the adaptation on which it rests.*

Now, between the vocal organs of the performers when standing erect, and the service of song, we have already seen, there exists this adaptation so manifestly, that the service can be efficiently executed only in this posture. The ancient Jews, it would appear, had a physical structure in this respect, similar to our own. Until, therefore, the Maker of human bodies shall so revolutionise them, that they shall be fitted to sing more efficiently in the curved than in the erect position, the law stamped by the God of nature upon these bodies of ours shall remain unrepealed, and the same law, issued by the God of revelation—"Stand up and bless the Lord," shall continue to be binding.

The erect posture, then, not being prohibited in the New Testament by either precept or practice, and all the reasons for it remaining as of old, it follows that it cannot be classified with the abrogated ceremonials of the past.

2. *Nor can the precept regulating the posture of praise be ranked in the second class, i.e., among those Divine directions which Christians generally hold to*

*be adequately obeyed, if the spirit which they inculcate be exhibited.* To be silent when the praises of God are being sung in the sanctuary is certainly a strange submission to God's command—a noiseless protest against the heavenly precept, “sing aloud;” and to sit down in the sanctuary when God orders us to stand up and praise, is, to say the least of it, not an *upright*, but a *crooked* compliance with the celestial injunction. When “the sacrifice of praise” is being offered, not to sing is direct and absolute disobedience to God's command; and to join in the sacred song sitting is but partial and imperfect obedience—it is a compliance with one part of the precept, and a rejection of the other. All God's precepts, and all parts of each of them, demand and deserve to be honoured fully, regularly, and cordially, not merely in the spirit, but also in the letter; not merely “with our spirits,” but also “with our bodies, which are God's property.” Now, we hold that the Divine precept, “Stand up and bless the Lord,” is not adequately honoured by a congregation which sings in the sitting attitude. No doubt we may stand and not fully and perfectly obey it; but if we sit at the service, without a physical necessity, we cannot fully honour it as we might do, and as all our Father's precepts should be honoured. The spirit of the service *may* be wanting to those who stand, but the posture of the service *is* wanting to those who sit. Over the *spirit*, the holiest of God's people have not always complete command;

over the *attitude of his body* the healthful worshipper has control; so that deficiency in the latter, which we have altogether in our own power, is less excusable than in the former, which a Divine agency alone can regulate. For this spirit of praise which God requires, nothing can compensate—no modification can be tolerated here. Without the heart, the most splendid performances in Divine worship are nothing; yet, instead of the standing attitude, which alone the Bible prescribes, from the poor bed-ridden invalid, from the aged and the weak, God will in mercy accept another. By all such the precept is adequately obeyed, whether they sit, or lie, or recline; but of all who are qualified in the sanctuary, God requires the service to be performed according to the manner, as well as according to the spirit prescribed. Thus only would God's command be adequately honoured *by them*.

The directions given in Romans xvi. 16—"Salute one another with an holy kiss," and in John xiii. 14—"Ye ought to wash one another's feet," Christians generally hold to be adequately obeyed, when we cherish and manifest the dispositions which these precepts inculcate, though not in the manner prescribed and prevalent among the Jews. By the South Sea Islanders, the command to salute their Christian friends with an holy kiss, if they possess the affectionate fraternal spirit, would be fully obeyed by their *rubbing noses*, and by ourselves in *shaking hands*, when this is prompted by cordial

Christian love ; the kissing custom being prevalent, and considered proper by us, only among those who are or intend to be relations. Kissing in those countries, and in those distant days, occupied the same place, and served the same purpose, that shaking hands now does with us. So the command —“wash one another’s feet,” is held by us to be adequately obeyed, when, with kind Christian feelings, we attend to the wants and comforts of a guest or weary sojourner ; the literal act enjoined being in general quite unnecessary in a clime like ours that is moist, and among a people by whom sandals are never used. But wherever and whenever the clime of a country may require it, and the customs of a country present no obstacle, both these commands must be literally obeyed—the dispositions enjoined must be manifested in the prescribed manner or acts.

These, and such precepts then, are modified by circumstances, the duties being still incumbent, but the manner of their performance regulated by the customs and requirements of time and place.

Is the command directing us to stand at the service of praise similarly circumstanced ? Is it binding on us only as to the *matter* of the duty—the *manner* being of no importance ? And is the precept adequately obeyed in the prostrate, or the reclining, or the bending, or the sitting, or the standing posture, or in any other that vivacity, or indolence, or caprice may suggest ? And is the service as

efficiently performed in the one way as in the other ? I answer that the precept directing the posture in praise is not so circumstanced ; for, standing when offering public worship to Jehovah in the act of praise, is not, as promiscuous kissing would be, inconsistent with our ideas of propriety, nor a departure from our established mode of manifesting respect and reverence ; neither is it, according to the opinion of the musicians already quoted, unnecessary, as would be the washing of a guest's feet, which, being closely shod, were not covered with dust, nor scorched by the burning beams of a tropical sun ; but, on the contrary, it is in full and complete accordance with our present social customs—with our manner of showing respect—and, as already proved, it is necessary to the efficient discharge of the duty, and tends to induce many to join in it, who would otherwise sit silent.

The modes of salutation and of treating guests referred to are not customary with us ; but the posture of reverence and respect practised by the ancients and by the Easterns was the same that now prevails among ourselves. Standing and kneeling are now, as in olden time, the almost invariable attitudes of respect, whether in the worship of God, or in manifesting homage to our fellow-men. Haman was indignant when he saw that Mordecai *stood not up*, nor moved for him.—(Esther v. 9.) “ Even the aged arose and *stood up* in the presence of Job”—(chapter xxix. 8.) Abraham not

only rose to his feet, but ran to meet his three celestial visitants in the plain of Mamre. The gradations in Persian etiquette beautifully illustrate this. “When visited by an inferior, a Persian moves as if about to rise, but does not actually rise; when by an equal, he does rise, on his entering; when by a superior, he rises hastily, and meets him at the entrance of the apartment; when by a person of royal or very superior rank, he goes out of the room and meets him at the gateway or street door.” Even so are we accustomed to rise, as a mark of esteem for a respectable visitor, and, when presented to a superior, we stand, perhaps kneel. Does not a whole assembly of whatever rank rise on the entrance of the sovereign? In the Music Hall, when certain anthems are sung or pieces performed in the orchestra, do not the whole audience rise, through respect for the person praised, or the event celebrated? Were sitting the universal posture of respect and reverence among us, and were the vocal organs so changed that we could sing as well in the curved as in the erect position, the primitive divinely-prescribed attitude of praise might be altered;<sup>1</sup> but

<sup>1</sup> Moses “hid his face,” Elijah “wrapped his face in his mantle,” the angels “cover their faces with their wings,” in the presence of Jehovah; the Romans also prayed with their heads covered (*et capita ante aras Phrygio velamur amictu*.—Æneid iii. 545); and yet Paul declares that “every man praying or prophesying with his head covered dishonoureth his head.”—(1 Cor. xi. 4.) The apostle so speaks, because he was addressing not Jews nor Romans, but Greeks, among whom, according to Macrobius, “res divina fit, capite aperto;” “thereby teaching us,” says Jennings, “that, though the circumstances of dress and of *gesture* in Divine

such not being the case, standing remains the only authorised posture of praise to all who take God's Word as the only and supreme directory in faith and worship.

3. It remains then that our obligation to sing God's praise in the standing posture is to be ranked in the third class intimated, *i.e., among those duties which are still binding upon us, though not expressly enjoined in the New Testament.*

While I grant that it is not expressly enjoined in the New Testament, I hold, as already proved, that the position is abundantly sanctioned there. But let us refer to a few of THOSE DUTIES OR SERVICES RECOGNISED BY US AS DIVINELY AUTHORISED, THOUGH NOT COMMANDED IN SO MANY WORDS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

*We keep the first, instead of the seventh day of the week, as "the Lord's day,"* and we are quite satisfied, not only in the absence of a Divine precept, but in apparent opposition to the fourth commandment, that we are right in doing so. We have the example of the apostolic Church, sanctioned by Christ—(Rev. i. 10)—for observing the first day of the week as the Christian Sabbath, and for standing in the public worship of God in praise, we have, as already shown, the same high authority—the

worship, are, in themselves indifferent, yet such are proper to be used, as the customs of the country where we dwell have rendered significative of humility and reverence." Hence, if divine precept and physical reasons on this subject be both ignored, our social customs demand of us the posture of respect in praising God.

examples of Christ and His apostles, and of the Church in her militant and triumphant state. Let the objector then point out the precise precept for observing the first day of the week as the Sabbath, and we shall furnish him with an equally precise precept from the New Testament for the standing posture in Divine praise. Nay, the objector's precept must be more explicit for the change of the Sabbath, for his practice is in opposition to the practice of the ancient Church of God, whereas ours is in acknowledged accordance with it.

*Our Church baptizes infants*; and we are satisfied that in doing so we have a sufficient authority in God's commanding the infants of members of the Jewish Church to receive the seal of the covenant, and in the apostles' baptizing whole households at once; for there is, we think, no probability that God would deny to the Christian Church privileges which He bestowed upon the Jewish; nor can it be accounted for, that infant baptism was practised in the immediately post-apostolic church, unless by apostolic example. To the man who quotes a New Testament precept for baptizing infants, I engage to quote a similar precept from the same undoubted authority for standing in public praise; and the man who refuses to "stand up" when publicly singing the songs of Zion, has equal authority, rational and revealed, for refusing the baptism of believer's children.

*Our Church enjoins her "pastors and teachers" to*

*read the Holy Scriptures on the Sabbath publicly in the sanctuary,* and recommends that at least "one chapter from each Testament be read at every meeting." Now, in the New Testament we are directed to "search the Scriptures," and the Bereans are commended for doing so "daily," and a blessing is pronounced upon "him that readeth;" but we have no New Testament command for the duty enjoined and generally discharged by our Church, greatly, I am persuaded, to the edification of the people committed to her care. For this all-important duty and privilege—reading the Scriptures on the Sabbath to the assembled congregation, as a part of the service of the sanctuary—we feel that, in the absence of a "Thus saith the Lord," we have a sufficient Divine authority in the synagogue service divinely prescribed through Ezra, and sanctioned, and occasionally performed by Christ and His apostles. Precisely the same authority—the practice of the Jewish Church, followed out by Christ and His apostles—we have for standing when we approach God's throne in praise.

*Our Church directs that the Divine praises shall be publicly sung on the Sabbath in the house of God.* In the Epistle of James, a person is directed to "sing psalms when he is merry," and in Ephesians and Colossians, Christians are enjoined to "speak to themselves, and to teach and admonish one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs;" but we have no distinct and definite precept in the New

Testament for singing songs of praise to God as a part of public worship on the Lord's-day and in the house of the Lord, and yet we do so, assured that we are sufficiently authorised by God's command to the Jewish Church, and by the temple and synagogue service. The person, then, who refuses to stand when praising God in the public sanctuary, because there is no precept in so many words in the New Testament enjoining him to do so, must, to be consistent, refuse to sing God's praise in the church on the Sabbath, because no New Testament command defines that the service shall be performed at that place and time.

*We are not commanded in explicit terms in the New Testament to contribute one-tenth of all our increase to the cause of Christ,* and yet the authors of "Gold and the Gospel" argue, and I think conclusively, that the member of the Christian Church is, as effectually as the member of the Jewish Church, enjoined by God to cast a tithe of his income into the treasury of the Lord. Shall we renounce these privileges and duties, then, because the *ipsissima verba* of a precept are not to be found in the New Testament enjoining them upon the Christian Church? No; they are Divine, notwithstanding the non-appearance of such a precept, and no less Divine is the attitude of reverence and musical power in the service of sacred song.

That some Christian observances and duties, divinely authorised, were not directly enjoined by Christ and

His apostles, is a manifestation of consummate wisdom and kindness. A New Testament injunction would in some cases have been injurious, in others, quite unnecessary. For instance, Divine wisdom is displayed in not issuing any command for superseding the Jewish Sabbath, and for the observance in its stead of the first day of the week as "the Lord's day." Such a command would have given deep offence to the Jews, who were so jealous of their law; it would have been a barrier in the way of Christianity among that people. The seventh-day Sabbath is not, therefore, expressly abrogated by Christ or His apostles, neither is there any precise command issued by them for the observance of the first-day Sabbath, but most wisely it is allowed gradually to supersede the other—the reasons for the observance of a Sabbath being altered, or rather higher reasons being substituted—even Christ's completion of redemption work.

How enhanced does the privilege of the Christian Sabbath now come to us! As Jesus said to His disciples at the last supper, "Do this in remembrance of me," so, in His invariably meeting with His Church assembled on the first day of the week, between His resurrection and ascension, and in His departing in their view on the first day of the week from all earth's works and woes, and in granting His Spirit on the first day of the week, according to His promise and prayer, we can hear Him counselling, commanding—"This day keep sacred to my name,

in remembrance of my work finished, my victory won." Oh, yes! the Christian Sabbath transcends the Jewish in our esteem, as far as the soul's redemption excels the world's creation; and, in the example of the apostolic Church, sanctioned by Christ after His resurrection, and then by the Holy Spirit, we have the authority of Heaven for keeping the Lord's-day, though the *litera scripta* of a command to do so be not found in the New Testament.

Now, as a command expressly abrogating the Jewish Sabbath, and authorising the first day of the week to be the Christian Sabbath, would, at the outset of Christianity, have been injurious; so the repetition of precepts already given in the Old Testament, with regard to many other duties and privileges, would be quite unnecessary. The Old and New Testaments constitute God's Book—the instructions, laws, promises, which, in His mercy and wisdom He has given to the Church. The Church of God to which this Divine indivisible law was given, is, and ever has been one, under whatever dispensation. Christ and His apostles argued and taught out of the Old Testament—(Acts xxvi. 22.) What was a moral duty to the Jew, is a moral duty to the Christian. Every precept of a moral nature is as binding upon the Christian of the present day, as it was upon the Hebrew in the days of the prophets. For the Church in its minority, God issued and recorded the command "Keep holy the Sabbath-day;" but to the Church in her ma-

turity under Christ, He does not repeat the command, because the adult Church better understands, and more highly appreciates the reasons for the precept. God issued the command to His Church of old, that a man should not marry his sister. This precept He has not repeated in the New Testament, knowing it to be unnecessary, for all who take the whole Bible as the rule of their conduct. God commanded His Church of old, to dedicate their infant children to Him in the rite of circumcision. The moral part of this law is still binding upon the Church under her Christian phase. Her members are authorised and enjoined by it to consecrate their children to God; but the Spirit of wisdom, designing to alter the *form* of the ceremony, and, instead of the Jewish form—the cutting away of flesh—to substitute another, even the application of water to the person, each form symbolising the removal of moral impurity—expressly enjoins upon the apostles, in the public recognition of members of the Church, that they shall *baptize* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; whereas, designing that the *subjects* should remain as before, and having expressly mentioned the subjects by name to the Church before, He does not direct them to baptize *infants*, knowing it to be quite unnecessary. The Church of old was enjoined to give one-tenth of all their increase to the treasury of the Lord; and why should the command be repeated to the Church now, having so much

weightier reasons of gratitude, and so many more and expensive duties of a missionary stamp to perform ? And why especially enjoin one-tenth upon the *early* Christian Church, which, in her deep poverty and abounding generosity, far exceeded it ? It was altogether unnecessary for the literal apostolic Church. God commanded His Church of old to stand when worshipping Him in praise. He did not repeat that precept to His Church in the New Testament, because the members of the Church being principally Jews, were accustomed to that attitude in praise, and, of course, were practising it ; and besides they had, and we now have, reasons of deeper gratitude, reverence, and love, than the ancient Jews had ; and, if our higher privileges could clothe God's command with greater authority, we are more imperatively called on, in the worship of praise, to glorify God with our **BODIES** and our spirits which are His, in the posture of reverence and musical power. To repeat the command, therefore, in the New Testament—to say to the Church already habituated to the standing posture when singing the Divine praise, "Stand up and bless the Lord," would have been altogether unmeaning and unnecessary.

If any person or people then grudge to stand when offering the sacrifice of praise in the house of God, let them not justify themselves by alleging that it is an abrogated part of the Old Testament ceremonial, or by the plea that the posture is not enjoined in the New Testament.

## OBJECTION SECOND.

*"The argument from the practice of the Jewish Church proves too much, for it would justify the employment of instrumental music in the service of the sanctuary, and demand of us other practices, in which it is not proposed—it would be even absurd, that we should imitate the Jewish worshippers."*

If instrumental music would enhance the service of sacred song, who dare forbid what Jehovah sanctioned in His Church? Is there any intellectual or physical power of man—any acquirement, any result of man's skill, taste, or toil, that should not be consecrated to God, and, if possible, employed in His service? Why should the servants of Satan be the great proficients in music? Why should Beelzebub and Bacchus, "the tap," and the theatre, have the best of it? Even blinded prejudice cannot deny that the service of our God deserves and demands the exertion of man's best energies and skill. The warmest advocates, however, of instrumental music, and those of most refined taste in the science and practice of it, will readily grant that no tones are comparable to those of the human voice. The vocal music of the imperial choristers in St. Petersburgh far surpasses, in sweetness and effect, the sounds produced by the combined power of the most exquisite musical instruments. On this subject, Dr. Duff judiciously observes—"When a church becomes faint in singing Jehovah's praise,

and this flatness is indicative of want of fire from above in the soul, how often, instead of waiting upon God for the stirring up of the languid affections, is there a tendency to try to compensate for the deficiency, by mere mechanical utterances, through the aid of organs or trained bands. *I am acquainted with no theoretical objection to the employment of these as auxiliaries*—but there is a fatal tendency in lukewarm and fashionable churches, to regard them, not as auxiliaries, but as substitutes, for singing God's praise, and for the devotion of the worshippers. But to sing the praises of God by proxy is as preposterous as to pray by proxy;” and the delusion connected with this instrumental performance is, that multitudes can listen to it with delight, and can, it is to be feared, frequently mistake this carnal pleasure, this gratification of their musical taste, for devotional feeling. So that instrumental music is not in itself wrong, but its introduction, as above intimated, generally results from flagging spiritual feelings, and often issues in overpowering and suppressing the vocal service, and in silencing the congregation. This, however, is evidently an abuse; and from it no argument can be properly taken against the judicious and reasonable use of this powerful auxiliary. As there is manifestly a tendency in many precentors, and in almost all congregations, to fall below the proper pitch, many musicians are of opinion, that an instrument should be employed to remedy this great evil, to sustain

the voices of the worshippers, and, if considered advisable, to occupy suitably the intervals between the stanzas. In this way might the Church, greatly to her advantage, enjoy much more of the service of song than is now usual or possible ; and they farther suggest, that if singing in parts, when well executed, is so desirable, and if it can scarcely be expected that our congregations can or will give that attention to music and to practisings, that would qualify them to engage in this performance with satisfaction or effect, that they shall continue to sing in unison as they now do—to sing the air, and leave the other parts to the organ ; and they assure us that when this combination of the vocal and instrumental is well managed, as in many German congregations, the result is all that could be desired. *However, inasmuch as we have no evidence or intimation, that instrumental music was employed by the apostolic Church, or by the primitive Christian Church for centuries, we have no such authority for using it, as we have for observing the posture of reverence in our public worship.*<sup>1</sup>

But the objector holds that our Bible argument, carried out to its full extent, would involve us in some other Jewish practices in public worship, which would be most inconvenient in the Christian Church. One of the professional musicians, whose opinion I have already quoted in favour of the standing posture when singing, considering the

<sup>1</sup> See Note D., Appendix.

question as a purely musical one, states, in opposition to the Scriptural argument, that "The Levites stood up to sing barefooted, and with their heads covered; and in this we would not be inclined to imitate them." Nor are we required—for a Divine law, or a divinely-sanctioned practice of the church (such as that under consideration), which is merely arbitrary, local, temporary, is to be obeyed, or followed by us, only in accordance with the general sense, or established local laws of propriety, and until its end be attained. For us here and now to imitate the Jewish worshippers in the practices referred to, would be in opposition to those laws, it would be an outrage on decency, to be in the sanctuary during public worship with our shoes off and our hats on. So that in reality, when standing with the feet shod and the head uncovered, we are worshipping just as the Jewish Church did, *i.e.*, in the manner which, according to prevailing custom and opinion, is the most becoming and reverential. Besides, our Scriptural argument does not require that a Christian congregation shall stand, because a Jewish congregation stood, when hearing the Word of the Lord read; nor that a Christian minister shall sit when addressing his congregation, because Jesus and the Jewish teachers sat when expounding the law and the prophets in the synagogue—for standing was not the invariable posture when the Divine Word was being read, nor was sitting the invariable, nor with the apostles

the common, attitude when preaching—(Acts xiii. 14-16; John vii. 37.) So that as to the postures to be observed in these public services, we are not directed by any precise precept, nor by any invariable practice of the ancient Church of God; whereas, the precept is most explicit, and the ecclesiastical practice invariable, with regard to standing at praise. In the former services, posture is optional—in the latter, it is prescribed.

#### O B J E C T I O N   T H I R D.

*“ We will not stand in public praise, because we would thus homologate with churches, some of whose principles, &c., we repudiate.”*

As to some observances, perhaps, there would occasionally be force in this objection; but, with regard to the point under consideration, there can at present be none. If any rites and postures be utterly unauthorised by Scripture, there can be no valid objection to our refusing them, though they be in themselves indifferent. But, as to those observances in Divine worship, which are sanctioned by revelation or reason, there can be no plausible apology for neglecting them *now*, whatever there may have been at the Reformation period. Rome's ordaining numerous fasts can be no adequate reason for our contempt of a fast-day, or for converting it into a feast-day, if the Bible or experience teaches that occasional fasting is a duty. Rome professes many fundamental Gospel doctrines, offers prayer

and praise to God ; notwithstanding this, we must hold these tenets, and perform these duties, because God teaches and enjoins them. Those Romanists privileged to praise God do so standing ; nevertheless, we must do the same, because Heaven's directory for public worship sanctions this attitude—and in so doing, we will homologate, not with Romanists only, but with English Protestants of all denominations, and with many congregations in our own land, and with the supreme court of our own Church. If any man's Protestantism be superior to that of all those parties, he should find some less suspicious means for displaying it.

#### O B J E C T I O N   F O U R T H .

*“Any change in the worship in a Presbyterian congregation should be introduced only by the authority of the supreme court of the Church.”*

On the subjects considered, there are three methods by which the supreme court might sanction a change, an improvement—by legislation, by recommendation, and by example. Many members in the General Assembly recollect the *civil war* that was waged around the sacred “old twelve,” and in defence of the precentors’ right to mangle the music by spelling out the psalm line by line ; and knowing that many still have a dogged attachment to old usages, especially if it be proposed to supplant them by others requiring some spirit and activity, they avoid both legislation and recommendation ; but, *by*

*their example* when engaging in the solemn service of song, they stamp the posture of reverence and musical power with their approbation—declaring it to be comely and right. In the same way did Jesus, by His inspired apostles, act with regard to the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, and, I presume, for the same reason. If any innovator attempt to introduce any change that is unscriptural or absurd, the courts of the Church are open, and all who love the ways which are both old and *good* can have immediate redress.

## OBJECTION FIFTH.

*"It is an innovation; our fathers sat and sung, and so will we; admit one change, and how many will follow in quick succession."*

Innovation! Is not Christianity itself an innovation upon paganism; was not the Reformation an innovation upon popery; and are the Reformation Churches so perfect as to admit of no farther innovations conforming them more to the primitive apostolic model? Forbes M'Kenzie's act prohibiting Sabbath traffic in the drink of drunkards is a sweeping innovation upon the late popular Sabbath-profaning customs of Scotland; will the Sabbatarian—the temperance advocate—the philanthropist—the Christian, therefore, denounce it, and petition for its repeal? Will the most blinded and dogged votary of "the good old ways"

creep up to Dublin on "a side car," because the railway system is new? What absurdities man will advocate when his eyes are bandaged with prejudice! Were it a fact, then, as alleged by the objector, that standing at psalmody is an innovation, it might be dutiful and correct. But the reverse is true. It is no departure from the good and the old way, but from the modern way of silent indolence and indifference. The practice is as old as the apostolic Church—as old as the synagogue and temple service. But what though it were an innovation? Is it therefore wrong? Have we not in our own day had innovations most salutary, and some of these connected with the subject under consideration—church psalmody; innovations reversing the innovations imposed upon our Scottish forefathers? The "Long Parliament" passed an act obliging all precentors to read out the psalm line by line. To this regulation our Scottish ancestors submitted through their anxiety for amalgamation with the English Presbyterians, many of whom, it would seem, could not read. To this change they yielded with great and reasonable reluctance; for they had been accustomed to sing their sacred songs chiefly from memory; but, by the change thus introduced, their music was interrupted at least three times in each stanza, and the current of thought and feeling arrested, and the voice of melody hushed, while the precentor drawled out the sacred song line by line, taking special and orthodox care that the reading of

the last word and the singing of the first syllable of each line should be in one breath and one tone. What was at first a most offensive innovation soon became an established, and, to the unmusical, and indolent, and voluntarily ignorant, a pleasing custom. But, for Scotland and Ulster's progress in sacred music, that act of the "Long Parliament" was far too long and too devoutly obeyed. In process of time, however, the innovation, most unmusical and parliamentary as it was, had to yield before a vigorous assault. Only a few years have passed since the attempt was made to upset the "lining system," and to introduce what was announced as an innovation, but what, in reality, was only a returning to the old way—in this case, the good and the reasonable, as well as the old way. At first only half the absurdity was laid aside, and two lines instead of one were given out, that the return to the common-sense system might be gradual, and that prejudice might not be too violently assaulted. A lengthened conflict followed, and victory at last declared in favour of reason and good taste. The improvement was so manifest that the remaining half of the absurdity was more easily dispensed with, and now almost universally throughout the whole Presbyterian Church, the service of song is a plain, simple, continuous service; not, as formerly, a compound of mumbling and music, of reading and singing—reading half sung, and singing half spoken; and, notwithstanding all the reminiscences of ease and sweet indolence connected.

with the exploded “lining system,” and all the angry feelings and unworthy sayings occasioned by its repudiation, where is the reasonable man—nay, of those who were its most devoted admirers, where is there one who could wish the Church to return to it. Here, then, were two changes, directly the opposite of each other—the one by parliamentary authority, the other by the reviving zeal and taste of the Church, and both stoutly resisted by multitudes. In the visible Church we may expect to find some volatile spirits ever on the wing—“given to change;” and, from indolence, or obstinacy, or a spirit of opposition, or from an ambition to be considered the guardians of the old ecclesiastical landmarks, we may expect to find others ever ready to resist every change, however manifest the improvement. So that we must judge of every proposed change on its own merits—by its accordance with Revelation, reason, and the progress of the age; not by the aerial dreams of fickle reformers, nor by the determined resistance of the obstinate. The institution for instructing the deaf and the dumb and the blind, the Bible, the tract, the missionary societies, are all innovations. Alas! alas! how *new* they are! How late, how slow was the Church in awakening to a sense of her duty—her deep, deep debt to perishing sinners, and to her generous and longsuffering Saviour! Would any sane man—dare any man, propose that our five annual missionary collections should be swept away, because

they are innovations—because that twenty years ago we had no such thing ? Oh, that a time of reviving and refreshing may soon come from the presence of the Lord, that we may have many more such innovations, and that those we have may be carried on with greater zeal and success !

## OBJECTION SIXTH.

*“The aged, the weak, and the weary are unable to stand.”*

Neither the law nor the Gospel requires what is physically impossible. God delights in mercy rather than sacrifice. In some cases, however, the aged and weak feel relieved by an occasional change of position as well as the young and strong ; but, if not, neither reason nor revelation has any claim upon them ; and these aged, and these weak Christians, occupying a position their infirmities require, can tolerate without a frown—nay, they can rejoice in the alacrity, and earnestness, and vigour manifested by the young and the healthful in “standing up to bless the Lord ” with all the energies of their bodies as well as of their spirits. But, if a man be not an intelligent, and tolerant, and peaceful Christian, and if he have got a corpulent, burdensome body, with but indifferent “understandings” to bear it, the probability is that he will beat up for recruits, and wage war upon his fellow-worshippers who have presumed to rise above his level. The objection considered would lose much of its plausibility.

if the kneeling posture at prayer—a decided improvement—were observed in our churches, or if our public services were so arranged that prayer and praise should not follow each other in immediate succession ; and this could be most easily managed, were the recommendation of “The Directory for Public Worship” attended to, i.e., “that one chapter of each Testament be read at every meeting.”<sup>1</sup>

Of those who come wearied to the house of God, what shall we say ? Is their fatigue a necessity, from which, in their destitute circumstances, they cannot free themselves, and yet have means of life for their dependents ? Then let them sit and sing, if thus they can perform the duty better ; for, like the infirm, whether they sit, they sit unto the Lord, or whether they stand, they stand unto the Lord. But, if excess of work during the week, or late labour on Saturday night, have so fatigued the body as to render not only a sitting, but a reclining posture necessary to the ease and comfort of the jaded frame—to the renovation of the exhausted muscular system—this bodily state is the result of sin, of labour to excess, or too long continued—it may be, to the very dawning of the day of rest, and prompted perhaps by covetousness, and cannot, therefore, be seriously assigned as an adequate

<sup>1</sup> Then the order might be—Praise, reading, prayer, reading, praise, sermon, praise, collection and public announcements, prayer and benediction. Neither against kneeling at prayer, nor reading before prayer, can the charge of innovation be preferred, for both are practised at family worship.

reason for the neglect or imperfect performance of a most important religious duty. The victim of such toil is fit for his bed, but not for the worshippers of God in the beauty of holiness, with either his body or his spirit. He offers to God the maimed and the blind ! Let there be, according to a good old Jewish custom, a “ preparation for the Sabbath”—a bodily as well as a spiritual preparation—and so let the body be presented to God, not bruised nor broken, nor bent down by the world’s burthens ; let the soul be presented to God, not crushed by Mammon’s chariot-wheels, nor torn by worldly cares nor sensual lusts ; but body and soul a waking, living sacrifice—not a dull, drowsy, dead carcase ; otherwise the offering cannot be accepted.—(Lev. xxii.) I never understood that the aged and infirm did themselves censure the Church for standing at praise ; but others, opponents of the reform, unasked, and for lack of argument, most *tenderly* sympathise with them, and *generously* advocate their cause, though they have lodged no complaint !

## OBJECTION SEVENTH.

*“ After all, saith the objector, I cannot get rid of the impression that it is a matter of perfect indifference whether I sit or stand when praising God; it’s the heart God wants, no matter what may be the posture of the body.”*

“ The heart is everything !” Then let baptism, and the Lord’s supper, and public worship be dispensed

with ; let no prayer ever be uttered, no psalm ever sung ! Let the heart sing ; let the heart pray ; let the heart commune with God ; let the parent's heart dedicate his child to God ! To this system the Society of Friends approximate ; but, in our view of God's revealed will, we are to glorify God with our bodies as well as with our spirits. The pious Jews did so ; Jesus and His disciples did so. If, then, God has given us any revelation on the subject under consideration, HE must have thought it to be of some importance ; and it is the manifest interest and duty of every worshipper to be acquainted with that Divine instruction. Ignorance of what God has taught and enjoined is not indifferent. It is not a matter of indifference whether we do what God has commanded, and in the manner He has prescribed. If the duty were unnecessary, and the manner of its performance optional, why should infinite wisdom prescribe the one or the other. If sitting when offering direct worship to the Holy One of Israel in the public sanctuary were as acceptable to God, as becoming and as profitable to man, as standing, why should sitting at praise never be prescribed, never mentioned in the Bible, or practised by the Church of the Old and New Testament ? Is a ceremony, or its form—a duty, or the manner of its performance—of no importance, because custom, or prejudice, or ignorance may declare it to be so ? God's will revealed to us by a precept, or by a divinely-sanctioned practice of His Church, can alone

make it imperative on man and acceptable to God. Whatever has this authority is important, imperative—cannot be indifferent; whatever is without this, should not bind the conscience. Being unimportant, it may be observed for the sake of convenience, but no authority can make it imperative. Some may consider it quite unimportant whether water be applied to a child when it is being dedicated to God; but the King and Head of the Church has commanded His messengers to disciple and baptize the nations; and all who make conscience of obedience to God will be baptized.

So may standing—the posture of reverence and musical power—be considered by some to be quite unimportant; but this is the posture for praise that God prescribed to His Church, and experience and observation declare it to be in complete accordance with the physical frame. So that the hallowing of the Lord's-day is as much a matter of indifference as standing in the sanctuary at the service of song; the one, as clearly as the other, is enjoined by God; the one, as invariably as the other, was practised by the Church of God; and the one, even as the other, accords with man's physical constitution. Whoever holds that standing at praise is a matter of indifference, must, to be consistent, hold that sprinkling with water in baptism, and hallowing the Lord's-day are observances perfectly optional; but, to the Protestant—the Bible Christian—they are matters of principle and duty; and equally so, if similar

Divine authority can make it so, is the standing posture in praise.

Through want of consideration, and of interest in the thing, and having long sat in silence or in song, and never having been roused to perform the service with energy and spirit, some will not see their way to this conclusion. Some whole congregations may be thus, the precentors alone excepted; in others, some will see their duty, and do it; while perhaps the many, in the meantime, will shut their eyes and sit still—"they will not consider."

A question of some interest here suggests itself. If a Church, say the Irish General Assembly for instance, be divided in their practice on this subject—some congregations being accustomed to stand, and others to sit at psalmody; and if it be considered desirable that uniformity should prevail in this religious exercise; or, if in one congregation some members assume the erect, others the curved posture in praise—which party, for the sake of uniformity, should change—which party is bound by fidelity to Divine truth, and by brotherly love, to yield to the other? Shall the standers sit down rather than offend their sedentary brethren, though they are commanded "to stand up and bless the Lord;" or, shall the silent become vocal, and the sitters rise to worship? If each party, having thoroughly examined the subject, be convinced that they alone have Divine authority for the course they are pursuing, evidently neither can yield; for to each

this would appear to be a surrender of principle ; but if either party acknowledge that they do not propose to rest their procedure on Scriptural authority, and the other avow that they are influenced in their course, not merely by taste and presumed advantage, but that they are constrained on rational grounds, and by Divine authority, manifestly the latter, in ordinary circumstances cannot yield ; whereas the former, having no principle involved, can yield without any scruple. Now, it is the sitting party who proclaim that the heart is everything, that it is a matter of pure indifference whether we sit or stand in the duty of praise ; and, so far as I have been able to learn, they do not pretend that their favourite posture has any countenance from the precepts of the Bible, or from the practice of the Church when under inspired or directly Divine government, or from the relation of the service to the vocal organs ; whereas those who stand in this highest and most heavenly act of Divine worship, propose what seems to them plain Scriptural authority, and invariable and divinely-sanctioned ecclesiastical usage, to justify their procedure. The answer to the question is clear—that the former should have the pleasure of yielding to the latter—that the sitters should “stand up” along with their standing fellow-worshippers and “bless the Lord,” joyfully availing themselves of the opportunity presented of showing how ready, how anxious they are “in honour to prefer one another.” In imitation of Paul, who,

in the case of Timothy, submitted to a Jewish ceremony in his opinion of no importance ; and who, though considering flesh to be wholesome food, and wine to be a useful beverage, was ready to forego the using of both during life, rather than offend his Christian brethren ; those members of the Church who do not consider that the standing posture in praise is wrong—that their favourite crooked position is Scriptural, are bound, if they be followers of those apostles who were followers of Christ, and if uniformity be a desirable, a comely thing in a worshipping assembly, to stand, when in the public sanctuary they worship the glorious, the adorable Jehovah in the service of praise. This they could do in purity, charity, and piety : in purity, for their conscience would not be defiled, fully persuaded, as they are, that they do no wrong, there being no principle involved ; in charity, to avoid the appearance of giving offence, and to edify and please their fellow-worshippers ; and in piety, to glorify God ; for, in their opinion, those who stand in praise, because the Scriptures countenance this posture, “stand to the Lord giving God thanks.”—(Rom. xiv. 6.) But those who consider the sitting posture to be unauthorised by God, and therefore wrong, to them it is wrong, “for whatever is not of faith is sin”—(Rom. xiv. 23)—they cannot, therefore, yield to any authority or persuasion in ordinary circumstances, that would constrain them to that posture in praise, even though offence should be *taken* ;

for they have read that Christ healed on the Sabbath, and preached to, and associated with, sinners, notwithstanding that in doing so He crossed the traditions of the doctors, and the customs, and ecclesiastical authority.

Some, having taken their position, will keep it; and some who care for none of these things, and who think "the easy way the best," will accompany them; we may try in such cases to instruct and persuade, but it will be with slender hopes of success. If intelligent Christians only *consider* the subject, though all may not be of opinion that the Divine injunction and the Church practice—depended upon as authoritative in this argument—are binding upon us as to the posture in psalmody; many, I am persuaded, will be of opinion that in the standing posture the service can be more efficiently performed, and that it is every man's duty, and every Christian's privilege and pleasure to serve God in the best possible manner, with all the faculties and affections of his soul, and with all the energies of his body. This conclusion being reached, they will be prepared to discharge their duty in Divine worship in the manner which they know and feel to be best; and soon, sitting in a solemn and reverential act of worship before the throne of the Holy One and the Just, will, like the precentor's "lining the psalm," be numbered among the things that were—a weakness to be forgiven and forgotten. Whether influenced by natural or Scriptural arguments, or both,

it is gratifying and hopeful to know that of late nearly all Sabbath-schools and prayer-meetings have assumed the erect posture in praise. About one-fourth of the congregations of the General Assembly, either occasionally or regularly, and the supreme court of our Church do now always stand when worshipping God; nearly all denominations of Christians in England do so. In the continental churches the choirs stand; the members in general keep their seats. Of the American churches I have not satisfactory information. The Waldenses do generally sit; but, on stirring occasions, and always when concluding their public services by singing the ascription of glory to the Triune God, they stand.



## C O N C L U S I O N .

IN ADDITION TO THE IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDED, THE HEART'S HARMONY WITH HEAVEN IS INDISPENSABLE. The reformation for which I have pleaded in the preceding pages is, that all should sing the great Creator's praise; that all should sing well; and in order to this, that all should learn to sing; and, finally, that the service should be performed in the most reverential and efficient posture—this, our experience and observation, and present social customs, declare to be that prescribed and exemplified in the Word of God. It will be granted that all this—the last point excepted—is most desirable and necessary. So far as my observation enables me to form an opinion, there is no part of the Divine service in the Church of the Reformation so inefficiently, unattractively performed as the psalmody. In many cases there is neither melody, nor harmony, nor music, in the performance. In other cases—not perhaps very numerous—the music is far too complicated for the mass of the worshippers to join in it; in fact, scarcely any but professional persons can or do take part in it. Evidently, the songs of Zion should be sung in such style as not to occasion shame or regret to the pious, or disgust and a sneer.

to any ; neither in such a refined, a high-wrought style, as to silence the multitude of God's professing people. Attention to this subject, then, and consequent improvement are indispensable, if the Church would do her duty to her Lord, to herself, and to the world.

But let us suppose that the whole reformation for which I plead were secured —that all who can sing, and who can stand to sing, were roused to do so—would this suffice?—WOULD THIS BE ALL? This would be much, but not all. For a whole congregation to engage vigorously and harmoniously to praise the Lord, has a most salutary influence upon minister and members, and upon the world thus attracted to the house of God to be permanently blessed. But we must not forget that “the people all may praise”—that the voices of choir, precentor, and people all may rise in sweet enrapturing harmony, and yet it may be, that—

“Soul is wanting there.”

It is song ; but it may be soulless song. The harmonists may draw near to God with their voices, while their hearts may be far away; and because they delight to sing, and others, because they delight to listen to sweet song, may conclude that they are in a devotional frame, and are acceptably praising the Most High God. Who that has witnessed it, has not been pleased with the singing of an infant school; yet the lovely little songsters

generally neither understand nor feel what they do. An efficient choir, or a well-trained music class delight in harmony to chant the songs of Zion, and we love to listen to their "grave sweet melody;" yet of their meaning some of these amiable vocalists may be altogether ignorant, and with their pure spirit and holy sentiment others may have no sympathy. Ah, yes ! and I fear it is so with many who sing, and many who are silent in the public worship of the sanctuary ! Who has not found the soul prone to wander in, or rather from, the service of song. How seldom are even advanced Christians satisfied that they have sung Jehovah's praise "with the understanding and the heart" undistracted ! Perhaps, without either thought or feeling associated with it, a melodious succession of single sounds, or a harmonious combination of simultaneous sounds, is calculated to please almost every ear. Let these sounds be associated with a divine song—words by a sacred or inspired poet, conveying holy thoughts and heavenly emotions, intelligible only to the renewed mind of spiritual discernment ; the music of the piece may most pleasurable regale the performers' ears and their hearers, while their souls have no sympathy with the heart of the inspired poet ; and, because they are pleased, they may presume they are pious. If music be the whole source of their enjoyment, theirs is a religion of the ear, arising alike from the living voice, the dead organ, or the distant waterfall ; little better than that of

the serpent ecstasied by the art of the wily charmer. To sing then, to sing well, to sing in the attitude of musical efficiency, and for all thus to sing Zion's songs, is not sufficient. There is a music of the inner man, there is a singing of the soul, there is a harmony of man's inward life with his outward life, *and a harmony of the whole with the life—the character of his Saviour-God*; there is a lower and a higher key in this Christian—this soul-song; and at every stage of the spiritual man's Zionward progress there is a "SELAH"—a rise in the music; and onward it flows, and upward it ascends, till it reaches the pitch and power in which the celestial songsters hymn their high halleluiyahs around the eternal throne. That anthem, which peals through all the halls of heaven, is but the infant Christian's air fully developed—the lisping notes of the babe-saint consummated in the skies. A vocal endowment will enable us to sing; but the heart hallowed and harmonised, the soul attuned by the Divine Spirit, alone can bless, or *praise* the Lord. "For the upright is praise comely;" they only draw *near* unto God with psalms, and come *into His presence* with singing. A mere vocal or instrumental offering—a lip service—a lifeless song—must be fearfully offensive, presented in the Christian temple to that heart-searching God, who cannot be deceived, and who demands the heart, and looks for loyalty and love from all His worshippers. How scathing the rebuke—"Take away from me the *noise* of your

songs, for I will not hear the melody of your viols ; ”  
“ when ye make many prayers I will not hear.”  
Why ?—their hands were full of blood, they were  
unholy. To sing acceptably, to offer effectual  
prayer, man must “ wash and be clean ”—he must  
become in principle “ willing and obedient ; ” and  
this germ of purity, this principle of harmony with  
God, will grow up to its full and fitting utterance  
in the psalmody of heaven.

Spirit of purity ! come and purify thy Zion, that  
we may praise thee in purity and in principle, as  
well as in psalms !

Spirit of holiness ! come and sanctify thy Zion,  
make her whiter than the snow, that we may worship  
thee worthily in the sweet service of song !

Spirit of peace ! breathe upon thy Zion here  
below, soothe her into peaceful harmony with the  
Zion above, that with alacrity we may join in the  
new song, the heavenly anthem !

Spirit of light ! let the film fall from “ the mental  
eye of faith,” scatter the clouds which hang between,  
that Zion may see her KING, the Lord of Hosts,  
the Lord her righteousness and strength, mighty,  
almighty to save to the uttermost, that she may  
confide with all the unwavering confidence of a little  
child, and in psalms of praise, and songs of triumph,  
laud His sovereign power !

Spirit of love ! come, dwell in thy Zion, warm  
these wintry hearts, thaw these frozen affections of  
her members, that, with all the intensity of a first

love—with all the ardour of seraphic love—with the glowing gratitude of immortals feeling themselves plucked from the burning, and planted in paradise of God—we may love the adored of an and of the redeemed—the beloved of the Father—the altogether lovely; and that, in Zion's high huiyahs—the most appropriate channel—our love and love may flow home to heaven !

Spirit of life ! breathe upon these slain !

Spirit of praise ! touch the hearts of these sinners, that their lips may be unsealed—that desponding may trust—that the mourners in Zion may rejoice—that the silent may sing aloud—that the people all may praise—that her own child may triumph—and her very enemies, as of old, be charmed with “ZION'S SERVICE OF SON.” Amen, Amen.

## A P P E N D I X.

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### NOTE A, Page 23.

#### HYMNOLOGY OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH.

MANIFESTLY both psalms and hymns were used in the public worship of the Church in those ancient times. Mosheim, with reference to the worship of the Church in the fourth century, says, "the Psalms of David were now received among the public hymns that were sung as part of Divine service," intimating either that they had not been *previously* received, or that they were subsequently superseded. From the voluminous "Christian Hymnology" of the middle ages, it is evident that they were so, and that uninspired poems were extensively used in the public services of the Church. Many, very many of these are in a high degree superstitious and idolatrous; but out of this mass of rubbish may be gathered precious sparkling gems. Some of them breathe throughout pure poetry, piety, and truth. The late Rev. R. C. Trench, a well-known and able author, and minister in the Established Church, published a volume of these Latin hymns. He states, concerning some of them, "They belong not to the Roman, or any other breviary, but are the immortal heritage of the universal Church." The poems selected by Mr. Trench belong to a lengthened period in the Church's history, reaching from the fourth to the sixteenth century. I subjoin a few specimens, not merely for the gratification of those who understand Latin, but of all who have an ear to appreciate faultless rhyme; and also the metrical translation of a Greek hymn, supposed to be about 1750 years old.

#### ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

Veni, Creator Spiritus,  
Mentes tuorum visita  
Imple superna gratia  
Quæ tu creasti pectora.



*Accende lumen sensibus,  
Infunde amorem cordibus,  
Infirma nostri corporis  
Virtute firmans perpeti.*

*Da gaudiorum præmia,  
Da gratiarum munera,  
Dissolve litis vincula,  
Adstringe pacis fœdera.*

*Per te sciamus, da, Patrem,  
Noscamus atque Filium,  
Te utriusque Spiritum,  
Credamus omni tempore.*

*Sit laus Patri cum Filio,  
Sancto simul Paraclito,  
Nobisque mittat Filius  
Charisma Sancti Spiritus.*

A FRAGMENT, BY ADAM OF ST. VICTOR, ON THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

*Jesu victor, Jesu vita,  
Jesu, vita via trita,  
Cujus morte mors sopita,  
Ad paschalem nos invita  
Mensam cum fiduciâ !  
Vive panis, vivax unda,  
Vera vitis et fœcunda,  
Tu nos pasce, tu nos munda,  
Ut à morte nos secundâ  
Tua salvet gratia !*

IN RESURRECTIONE DOMINI.

*Pone luctum, Magdalena, et serena lacrymas ;  
Non est jam Simonis œcna, non cur fietum exprimas ;  
Causse mille sunt lœtandi, causse mille exultandi :  
Alleluia resonet.*

Sume risum Magdalena, frons nitescat lucida ;  
 Demigravit omnis pena, lux coruscat fulgida ;  
 Christus mundum liberavit, et de morte triumphavit :  
 Alleluia resonet.

Gaudie, plaudie, Magdalena, tumbā Christus exit ;  
 Tristis est peracta scena, vīctor mortis rediit ;  
 Quem defiebas morientem, nunc arride resurgentem :  
 Alleluia resonet.

Tolle vultum, Magdalena, redivivum obstupe ;  
 Vide frons quām sit amēna, quinque plagas aspice,  
 Fulgent sicut margarite, ornamenta novae vitæ :  
 Alleluia resonet.

Vive, vive, Magdalena, tua lux reversa est,  
 Gaudiis turgescat vena, mortis vis absterea est ;  
 Mōesti procul sunt dolores, lēsti redeant amores :  
 Alleluia resonet.

ON THE LAST JUDGMENT, BY THOMAS OF CELANO.

(There is a version of this poem by Sir W. Scott; more than sixty others have appeared.)

Dies iræ, dies illa,  
 Solvet sæclum in favillâ,  
 Teste David cum Sibyllâ.

Quantus tremor est futurus,  
 Quando Judex est venturus,  
 Cuncta strictè discussurus.

Tuba, mirum spargens sonum  
 Per sepulchra regionum,  
 Coget omnes ante thronum.

Mors stupebit et natura,  
 Quum resurget creatura,  
 Judicanti responsura.

## APPENDIX.

Liber Scriptus proferetur,  
In quo totum continetar,  
De quo mundus judicetur.

Judex ergo quum sedebit,  
Quidquid latet, apparebit,  
Nil inultum remanebit.

Quid sum miser tum dicturus,  
Quem patronum rogaturus,  
Quam vix justus sit securus ?

Rex tremendæ majestatis,  
Qui salvandos salvas gratis,  
Salva me, fons pietatis !

Recordare, Jesu pie,  
Quod sum causa tue vite ;  
Ne me perdas illâ die !

Quærrens me sedisti lassus,  
Redemisti crucem passus ;  
Tantus labor non sit cassus.

Juste Judex ultiōnis,  
Donum fac remissionis  
Ante diem rationis.

Ingemisco tanquam reus,  
Culpâ rubet vultus meus :  
Supplicanti parce, Deus !

Qui Mariam absolvisti,  
Et latronem exaudisti,  
Mihi quoque spem dedisti.

Preces mæse non sunt dignæ,  
Sed tu bonus fac benignè,  
Ne perenni cremer igne !

Inter oves locum præsta,  
 Et ab hædis me sequestra,  
 Statuens in parte dextrâ.

Confutatis maledictis,  
 Flammis acribus addictis,  
 Voca me cum benedictis.

Oro supplex et acclinis,  
 Cor contritum quasi cinctis :  
 Gere curam mel finis.

The following is a version of part of what is considered to be

**"THE OLDEST HYMN OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH."**

Shepherd of tender youth !  
 Guiding in love and truth,  
 Through devious ways ;  
 Christ our triumphant king,  
 We come thy name to sing ;  
 And here our children bring  
 To shout thy praise.

Thou art our holy Lord !  
 The all-subduing Word !  
 Healer of strife !  
 Thou didst thyself abase,  
 That from sin's deep disgrace,  
 Thou mightest save our race,  
 And give us life.

Ever be thou our guide !  
 Our shepherd and our pride,  
 Our staff and song !  
 Jesus ! thou Christ of God !  
 By thy perennial Word,  
 Lead us where thou hast trod—  
 Make our faith strong.

So now and till we die,  
 Sound we thy praises high,  
 And joyful sing.  
 Infants and the glad throng  
 Who to thy Church belong,  
 Unite and swell the song,  
 To Christ our King.

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## NOTE B, Page 130.

"The Christian hymns were made to be sung at first by the whole congregation of the faithful, who were only little by little thrust out from this part of the service." The Italian Churchmen, with Leo X. at their head, used every effort to *paganise* the hymns of the Church, to restore them to the prosodical form, that they might not be so appreciated by the people.—R. C. TRENCH.

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## NOTE C, Page 131.

Perhaps since the Reformation, and in some partially Protestant countries, the law referred to has been relaxed, and *accredited persons* of the laity may now join in vespers.

"*Inter missarum solemnia nihil nisi Latine cantetur;*" and the same holds of vespers which, when they form a part of the Divine office, are always said or sung in Latin. "Apart from the sacrifice of the mass, and any other public office of the Church, hymns in the vulgar tongue are not prohibited, provided they be approved by the ordinary."

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## NOTE D, Page 153.

"The organ question was lately discussed in the Presbytery of London; the decision was that no particular congregation is at liberty to introduce any important change into their public worship without the authority of the Church. In the Lancashire Presbytery, constituting one-fourth of the English Presbyterian Church, the finding was, "that the mode of leading their psalmody should be left to the discretion of individual congregations." The Synod, at its late meeting, after a lengthened discussion on an overture moved by Dr. Hamilton, of Lon-

don, gave the following deliverance on the subject:—"That the introduction of instrumental music in public worship is disapproved by this Church; and all Presbyteries are enjoined to take order that no such innovation be introduced in any of the congregations within their bounds, but to take steps, as far as practicable, to encourage and cultivate the harmonious exercise of vocal music." In some sections of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, also, the question is agitated, and in both Scotland and England some congregations have actually introduced the instrument. The Free Church has not escaped the contagion. Dr. Candlish, alarmed at the innovation, has re-published the controversy conducted in the Presbytery of Glasgow, in 1808, by Drs. Porteous and Ritchie, with an introductory note of thirty pages. He homologates the arguments of Dr. Porteous against the use of instrumental music in Divine worship. He deprecates the controversy at present, as tending to occasion and perpetuate schism in the Presbyterian communities, and holds that, on Presbyterian principles, no particular congregation has a right to adopt such an innovation until sanctioned by the Courts of the Church.

The following is a brief digest of the "organ controversy," as presented in the work lately re-published by Dr. Candlish, and in the Rev. Alexander Cromar's "Vindication of the Organ," and J. W. Lamb's "*Organic versus Inorganic Music*:"—

1. For centuries there was no instrumental music in the public worship of the Christian Church, and its introduction was in the season of her darkest corruption.
2. The principal reformers disapproved of the organ.
3. The friends of the organ cannot consider its introduction to be a matter of principle or conscience.
4. It will hinder the re-union of churches, and occasion schism in those now united.
5. No Presbyterian congregation can, on their own principles, admit the change without the authority of the Church.
6. To employ the organ in Divine worship is to praise God by proxy; besides, it generally silences the congregation.
7. The Temple worship is wholly superseded, and with its priests and sacrifices its instrumental praise also is gone; in the synagogue, the model of the Christian Church, no instrument was employed. Instrumental music in Divine worship is as much incorporated with the Mosaic constitution as circumcision; it is so essentially ceremonial,

that, if admitted, there is no barrier, in principle, against the sacerdotal system in all its fulness, against the substitution of the symbolical for the real. The Old Testament countenances dancing at public worship as much as the use of the organ.

8. In the New Testament, if the use of the organ is not expressly prohibited, there is no trace of any other than vocal praise. "In Eph. v. 18, 19, there is a contrast between the heathen and Christian practice, *e.g.*, when you meet, let your enjoyment consist not in fulness of wine, but in fulness of the Spirit; let your songs be not the drinking songs of heathen feasts, but psalms and hymns; and their *accompaniment*, not the music of the lyre, but the music of the heart," &c.

To this the instrumentalists reply—

1. True, for centuries the Church did not employ the organ, so far as we know. During part of the period she was poor, and persecuted, and houseless; and during the remainder, as to many of her commissions and omissions, we have no ambition to walk in her footsteps; and that instrumental music, for the improvement of the service of praise, was resumed by the Church, in a corrupt age, if the thing were right in itself, is to be commended.

2. True, some of the reformers disapproved of the organ. "The Bible is the religion of Protestants." But hear old Richard Baxter—"Instrumental music in worship was set up by God. It is a natural help which it is our duty to use. Jesus joined with the Jews who used it. The last Psalm enjoins it. No Scripture forbids it; and if any object to it as a human invention, so are our tunes in which we praise God with the voice."

3. Conscience and the Bible demand that God shall be honoured with the best services we can furnish.

4. Enlightened and loving Christians can never dream that the organ question is an adequate cause of schism.

5. A Presbyterian Church, assured that the use of an organ in Divine worship is not merely an innovation, but an improvement, is not forbidden, but allowed by the "Directory for Public Worship," to avail themselves of it; for the compilers of that Directory say, "We have not expressed in it every particular which might be retained among us as comely and useful in practice."

6. The enunciation of a sweet familiar melody, whether by the organ or the human voice, instead of silencing the hearers, powerfully influences them to join in the air. Many are silent where there is an organ,

especially when unknown and complicated pieces are performed ; and multitudes are silent in churches where there is no organ. Silence, when God is being praised in song, is the result of sin, want of spirit, want of training.

7. Instrumental music is clearly and abundantly countenanced by God in the Old Testament. The institution of trumpets was no part of the service of praise ; it was typical, foreshadowing Christ's prophetic office, the proclamation of the Gospel. But the service of public praise, guided by instrumental music, is not spoken of in connection with the original tabernacle service for four hundred years after its appointment by Moses. This musical worship was introduced by David. The priests took no part in it. The Levites, and occasionally other qualified members of the Church, conducted it, so that the service of praise, vocal or instrumental, had no connection, "essentially or in principle," with the sacrifices or the priesthood. In what of the new dispensation did this instrumental music, if ceremonial and symbolical, meet its anti-type and abrogation ? Of singing with the voice, and with the heart or spirit, under the new dispensation, it could not be the symbol, for these privileges were enjoyed of old. Not as in former times, dancing is now confined to scenes of amusement and levity, apart altogether from religion ; but in the homes of the rich and the pious, instrumental music is still highly appreciated among us, whether for social or sacred purposes.

8. If it do not command, the New Testament sanctions instrumental praise.—Eph. v. 18, 19. The term *psalm* here used signifies, according to Calvin, a sacred ode to be sung to the accompaniment of the lyre ; and the word rendered "*making-melody*," means striking the strings of the lyre. The passage teaches the duty of praise, vocal and instrumental ; and that this praise must be cordial, sincere, of the heart. So that of the three terms here used in reference to praise, two imply an instrumental accompaniment.

The "singing," as well as the "melody-making," must be in the heart, yet both audible. The heathen and Christian assemblies are contrasted. In the one there is debauchery, carnality, the musical praise of false gods ; in the other there is temperance, spirituality, the musical worship of the true God ; in both there is the lyre-led song in praise of a deity ; but in the Christian meeting, the music, vocal and instrumental, is the expression of the heart, and the Deity so praised is the living God.

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